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Nick Carter Stories

A PRINCE OF PLOTTERS
OR
NICK CARTER'S FOREIGN FOE

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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A PRINCE OF PLOTTERS;

Or, NICK CARTER'S FOREIGN FOE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CALL FROM AFAR.

The distinction conferred upon Nick Carter was an extraordinary one.

Not often is an American detective summoned to Europe for advice, or because his professional services are required under circumstances baffling the astuteness and dogged persistency of Scotland Yard, the subtlety and searching skill of the French police, and the aggressive potency of the Russian secret service.

Still more seldom, in a matter of international importance, is preference given to a private detective, rather than one identified with Uncle Sam's treasury department, or bureau of criminal investigation. Such a distinction was, in fact, almost unprecedented.

There could be only one reason for it—that this private detective, Nick Carter, was considered by far the superior of any other American sleuth, and of those with whom he was called upon to confer.

The third of last October, at precisely noon, found Nick Carter seated in a handsomely furnished private office in the Palais de Justice, in the city of Paris. It was that of the head and front of one of the greatest police systems in the world, that of one of the most profound thinkers who ever devoted his mind to the development of systematic crook taking and identification, the director general of the department of criminal investigation—Monsieur Alphonse Bertillon.

Nick Carter occupied a chair near that of Monsieur Bertillon, who was seated at his desk.

Two other distinguished men were present.

One of them was Colonel Arthur Vance, of London, one of the chief officials and bright lights of famous Scotland Yard.

The other, a burly, bearded man in the fifties, was Ivan Malakoff, of St. Petersburg, then the deputy chief of the Russian police.

It was a gathering of men famous in their vocation, but the most celebrated among them, and of most striking personality, was the American detective, Nick Carter.

There were two other American detectives then in Paris, but that fact was known only by Nick himself, who, before leaving New York, had been informed of what would be required of him.

Nick had journeyed to France alone and in disguise, on one of the French liners.

The two other detectives mentioned had traveled on a Cunarder, by the way of London and Dover. They then occupied apartments in the Hotel de Calais, where they were registered as Mr. Percival Paget and daughter, of Staffordshire, England. They were said to be traveling for pleasure and the young lady's health.

Mr. Percival Paget, however, who appeared to be a refined, elderly man of reserved demeanor was—Chick Carter.

The young lady, who was provided with fashionable female attire, was—Patsy Garvan.

Such preliminaries and precautions gave promise, as Patsy aptly had put it, of—something doing.

That something then was under discussion in the office of Monsieur Bertillon.

The subject of the conference was, in fact, a Frenchman whose name had become in police circles a synonym for mystery and crime—Lucien Legarde.

"There are three chief reasons, Mr. Carter, why we have thought it wise to employ you in this matter," Monsieur Bertillon was saying. "One, because of your recognized ability, and our belief that you will accomplish the desired end, that of obtaining evidence sufficient to insure the conviction and punishment of this man, Legarde, who

must be literally wiped out of existence—also legally wiped out, of course," smiled Monsieur Bertillon.

"I certainly would not wish to wipe him out except within the law," replied Nick, also smiling.

"Another reason," Monsieur Bertillon continued, "is because our efforts in this direction have proved not only deplorably futile, but also have served because of their futility to subject us to considerable ridicule and chagrin. In other words, Monsieur Lucien Legarde is thought by many to be smarter than the police, if I may use one of your American adjectives."

Nick smiled again, significantly.

"The third," Monsieur Bertillon went on; "because you will have the advantage of undertaking this task without the knowledge of Legarde. You are a total stranger to him. He cannot possibly know that you are in Paris, or that you are likely to be employed in this work. You will, therefore, find him entirely unguarded. There are other reasons, of course, my dear Carter, but they already are obvious to you."

"Quite so, Monsieur Bertillon," Nick replied.

"The fact that both Colonel Vance and Mr. Malakoff were to be here at this time, their missions relating to crimes known to have been committed by Lucien Legarde in London and St. Petersburg, led me to cable you to come here, also, after receiving your message stating that you would undertake the work about which I had written you."

"I understand perfectly, Monsieur Bertillon, and am very glad of the privilege," said Nick, bowing to the others. "Suppose, now, that we come down to business."

"My sentiments to a T," said Colonel Vance. "My time, I regret to say, is somewhat limited. I must hit the Calais express at three."

"And I have deferred an appointment at the Russian legation in order to meet Mr. Carter," Malakoff remarked. "You take the ribbons, Monsieur Bertillon, and give him what information you can impart. It is little enough, indeed, in so far of being of any practical use is concerned," he added, gravely addressing Nick.

"A little information is better than none, Mr. Malakoff," Nick replied. "To begin with, then, Monsieur Bertillon, you spoke of crimes known to have been committed by Lucien Legarde. If known to have been the criminal, why has he not been arrested, tried, and convicted?"

Monsieur Bertillon smiled significantly.

"There is a vast difference between being morally sure of a criminal's guilt, Mr. Carter, and possessing tangible evidence sufficient to convict him," said he.

"That is very true," Nick admitted.

"In many respects," Monsieur Bertillon continued; "Lucien Legarde is a very remarkable man. He is the last representative of a distinguished French family. His father was an eminent chemist and scientist, also a physician of note. His mother was a successful novelist. He inherited from one his taste for physics, which now makes him such a serious menace to society, and from the other the perverted originality which invariably characterizes his crimes. Both parents have been dead about ten years."

"I follow you, Monsieur Bertillon," said the detective, bowing.

"As you may infer, therefore, Monsieur Legarde received a very superior education; but he also was marked with a criminal tendency which, as is frequently observed in such cases, did not manifest itself in his early years. He was thirty before he was even remotely suspected of evil. He now is nearly forty."

"Has he been engaged in a career of crime for ten years?"

"At intervals. Presumably when his funds are running low."

"Has he ever been arrested on suspicion?"

"Yes, but only to be discharged for lack of convincing evidence."

"Never convicted?"

"Never. That may seem strange, my dear Carter, but Monsieur Legarde is not an ordinary criminal, nor an ordinary man. As I have said, he received a superior education. He is an accomplished linguist. He acquired from his father a profound knowledge of chemistry and medicine. He is versed in the use of drugs, and has made discoveries in the distillation of various plants and herbs, the nature of which has never been suspected. He possesses formulas unknown to his contemporaries, decoctions said to have most mystifying effects upon the animal organism."

"H'm, is that so?"

"He has hypnotic powers, moreover, which for several years made him a figure in the Paris hospitals," said Monsieur Bertillon. "Innumerable operations of very serious nature have been successfully performed upon subjects rendered insensible by the hypnosis of Monsieur Legarde."

"A dangerous man, indeed, if bent upon evil," Nick observed.

"Nevertheless, if you were to meet him under ordinary conditions, Mr. Carter, knowing nothing about him, you would find him a very fascinating man."

"Indeed?" questioned Nick, somewhat incredulously.

"He is widely informed, and an agreeable talker. He has the polish of a diplomat, but can be exceedingly vivacious and entertaining. His audacity sometimes is amazing. His ingenuity in baffling justice is unparalleled. He laughs at the police. He predicts crimes, afterward commits them beyond any reasonable doubt, and then mocks and ridicules his accusers."

"I hope, then, that I may cross swords with this—but go on, Monsieur Bertillon," Nick broke off abruptly. "Has he never been systematically watched?"

"Watched!" echoed Monsieur Bertillon, smiling. "He has been watched, my dear Carter, for months at a time. He has been shadowed by experts. Spies have followed him all over Europe, but without the slightest success, in spite of the fact that the presence of Lucien Legarde in any locality is nearly always the forerunner of an amazing crime."

"For example?" Nick said inquiringly.

"The murder and robbery of Lady Carroll Langdon in London, last March, all of the known data concerning which has been brought here by Colonel Vance for your inspection."

"I read the American accounts of that case," said Nick. "Legarde was a visitor at the home of Lady Langdon when the murder and robbery were committed," put in the English detective.

"Yes?"

"He had presented genuine letters of introduction from a German count, with whom he had been on friendly terms in Berlin, and who is a distant relative of Lady Langdon.

He had not been informed, however, of the suspicions existing against Monsieur Legarde. The latter had been living in Berlin for nearly six months, then acting as the commercial agent for a Florentine art dealer."

"Was the cause of Lady Langdon's death positively known?" Nick inquired.

"The cause, undoubtedly, was an exceedingly subtle poison which, we have reason to be morally certain, was stealthily administered by Legarde. We could not find, however, nor have we been able to find, sufficient evidence to warrant his arrest."

"What were the circumstances?"

"Lady Langdon was found dead in bed one morning. All of her costly collection of jewelry had been stolen. It was kept in a safe in one of the walls of her sleeping room. The door of the safe was concealed with a secret panel, of the existence of which Lady Langdon alone was supposed to be informed. Her jewelry has not been recovered."

"I will presently examine the data concerning your investigations, Colonel Vance," said Nick.

"The papers are at your disposal," said Vance. "I have placed them in charge of Monsieur Bertillon."

"Another strange affair," said Monsieur Bertillon;" was the supposed abduction of the grand duchess, Olga Planovitch, who mysteriously disappeared from the ducal palace on the third of last December. She vanished as if the earth had swallowed her. No trace of her could be found. The utmost efforts of her family, the servants, and the police proved absolutely unavailing. A month passed and she was supposed to be dead, to have stolen from the palace in a fit of mental aberration, and to have committed suicide by drowning."

"There seemed to be no other solution of the mystery," remarked Malakoff.

"A letter then was received by the grand duke," Monsieur Bertillon continued. "It bore no signature, contained no address. It merely announced that the grand duchess would be restored to her family upon the payment of a ransom, amounting in American money to fifty thousand dollars, and including directions as to when, where, and how the ransom must be paid."

"That letter is included in the official report of my investigations," said Malakoff, glancing at Nick and pointing to a bundle of documents on Monsieur Bertillon's desk.

Nick bowed.

Monsieur Bertillon proceeded as if there had been no interruption.

"That cleared up the mystery, or one feature of it," said he. "The grand duchess had been abducted. The police were notified. Efforts were made to apprehend her abductors. They failed. Threats followed, and the ransom was paid, as directed. It was paid at midnight. One hour passed, a single hour—and Olga Planovitch was found sleeping soundly in her bed."

"Humph!" Nick ejaculated. "Clever work, indeed! It then was learned, of course, when she returned to the palace."

"No."

"Nor how?"

"No."

"But she must have explained——"

"She did not explain anything," Monsieur Bertillon interrupted. "When awakened, she supposed it was the morning of the fourth of December, the day following her mysterious disappearance. She did not know she had been missing. The month that had passed was a blank to her. She remembered nothing."

"Strange, indeed," said Nick. "It smacks of hypnotism. What was her physical condition?"

"She appeared perfectly well, Mr. Carter, but was unusually pale, as if she had been in confinement," said Malakoff. "Investigations followed. In a small, unused attic room in a wing of the palace evidence was found indicating that it had been occupied. There were crumbs of food, also soiled towels and bedding, with combings of hair perfectly matching that of the duchess."

"But a search had been made there during the month?"

"No." Malakoff shook his head. "It was not supposed, of course, that the duchess was in the palace. Thorough investigations were begun. The servants were questioned. All protested their innocence. The complicity of none could be proved, despite that it appears to have been absolutely essential. That is all. The mystery has not been solved."

"But," put in Monsieur Bertillon pointedly, "Legarde had been in St. Petersburg nearly a month. He disappeared on the day the ransom was paid."

Nick Carter smiled, but did not express any further opinion. He said simply:

"I'll examine Mr. Malakoff's report of the case."

"Now, coming nearer home," said Monsieur Bertillon, taking from his desk a huge package of documents tied with a red cord, "I will describe a few cases that came under my personal observation. Mysteries that have not yet been solved, crimes of which, though his tracks were so skillfuly covered that I cannot convict him, I am morally sure that Lucien Legarde was guilty.

"Conspicuous among them were the postal-note forgeries, the Danish bank swindle, the theft of the famous blue diamond sunburst from the Princess Valmonde, the Dupont murder, a crime predicted by Legarde a month before it was committed, but which was accomplished so mysteriously, and by means so subtle, that——"

"One moment, Monsieur Bertillon," said Nick, with a smile and gesture. "Pardon me for interrupting you, but you are providing too generous a meal for me to discuss at a single sitting. Let us expedite matters. Let us revert to the case of Lady Carroll Langdon, with which Colonel Vance is perfectly familiar. There are many questions I wish to ask. There are many points I shall want to discuss. We now shall progress more rapidly, I think, if you will allow me to take the reins and drive on in my own way."

Monsieur Bertillon was agreeable.

Colonel Vance bowed, and Malakoff likewise signified his approval.

The conference continued. It was a very remarkable one. Still more remarkable were the circumstances that made it necessary—this combination of forces to meet the criminal genius and check the lawless career of a single man. It is here set forth in partial detail only to suggest the resources, the ability, the craft, cunning, and daring of the man whom Nick Carter had been employed to oppose.

It was two o'clock when Colonel Vance arose to go.

At three o'clock the deputy chief of the Russian police departed to keep his appointment.

It was half past four when Nick Carter, then about to leave, took his hat and said gravely:

"I understand, Monsieur Bertillon, that the written order you have given me will, if required, insure the coöperation of the French police."

"Absolutely," bowed Monsieur Bertillon. "It imposes instant obedience to your commands."

"And gives me access——"

"To any place I can legally enter. It is a carte blanche investing you with my own official authority."

"Very good," said Nick. "You can tell me, perhaps, where I would be likely to find Monsieur Legarde. Is he frequently seen about town?"

Monsieur Bertillon shrugged his shoulders expressively.

"Do not infer, my dear Carter, that Legarde considers himself a fugitive from justice," said he. "He is not a skulker in dark holes and obscure corners. He is a familiar figure on the boulevards, in the restaurants, the hotels, and the theaters. He rents a house in the Avenue Henri-Martin, where, though a bachelor, he employs half a dozen servants. He is intimate with the popular beauties of the concert halls and vaudevilles. He has elaborate quarters in the Boulevard Montmartre, where for six months he has been posing as an astrologer, palmist, and——"

"That is sufficient," said Nick, interrupting. "Now, Monsieur Bertillon, one more question: Are you reasonably sure that Legarde does not know that I am employed in this work, and that I now am in Paris?"

"More—I am absolutely sure of it," Monsieur Bertillon forcibly declared. "Only three persons are informed of it—Colonel Vance, Monsieur Malakoff, and myself. We are discreet. We can be trusted. We knew secrecy to be imperative. It is impossible that another is informed of our plans, or of your presence in Paris. Yes, yes, my dear Carter, I am absolutely sure!"

Nick Carter bowed, saying simply:

"That is all, Monsieur Bertillon, at present."

CHAPTER II.

NICK CARTER SURPRISED.

It was nearly five o'clock when Nick Carter parted from Monsieur Bertillon. He appeared in disguise in the Rue de Rivoli a little later. He did not head for the Hotel de Calais, however, where his two assistants were quartered, and of whose presence in Paris Monsieur Bertillon, even, had not been informed. Nick had, for obvious reasons, established himself in a private hotel in the Rue de Clichy.

Five o'clock found him in the Boulevard Montmartre. He glanced at one of the several signs on a street door, then mounted the stairs to the second floor, where he knocked on the door of a front suite of rooms.

The door was opened by—Monsieur Lucien Legarde.

Nick Carter viewed him with more than cursory interest, this man of mystery and crime—a man of medium height, erect, and well built, with a lithe, muscular figure, a finely poised head, dark hair and eyes, a smoothly shaved face, a straight nose, firm mouth and chin, a clear, pale complexion, a face which many found attractive, even fascinating, yet in which Nick instantly detected sinister qualities, to which less keen physiognomists were blind.

Monsieur Legarde was scrupulously well dressed. His fashionable linen was immaculate. A diamond glittered in his cravat, another on one finger of a slender, white hand. He wore a loose velvet house jacket, embroidered with red silk. He was smoking a cigarette.

"Monsieur Legarde?" said Nick inquiringly.

Legarde bowed and smiled.

"Yes, monsieur," said he, with a peculiarly soft, yet incisive, voice. "You call outside of my hours. You are welcome, nevertheless. Come in."

"Thank you," said Nick. "I would like to talk with you."

Legarde ushered him into a handsomely furnished parlor and waved him to one of the armchairs. He was very polite, very graceful, and, in a way, very impressive, of all of which he appeared entirely unconscious.

"You would like to talk with me," said he, smiling. "Well, well, this is very nice! The feeling is mutual. I am alone here, you see, and have nothing to occupy me. Companionship is delightful. I abhor solitude. I enjoy my friends."

"Do you regard me as one?" asked Nick.

"Sapristi! Why not?" said Legarde, with a laugh, and looking the detective straight in the eye. "All men should be friends who have no cause for enmity. Will you smoke? Here are cigars at your elbow, or cigarettes, if you prefer. Your card—oh, really, there is no occasion."

"No occasion?" questioned Nick, who had produced a card bearing a fictitious name.

"No, indeed!" Legarde again laughed agreeably, while he drew up a chair and sat down directly opposite the detective. No occasion whatever."

"How is that, Monsieur Legarde?"

"Is it very surprising?"

"I confess that I don't understand."

"Pardieu! I will explain," said Legarde, still laughing. "I wonder at it, however, in a man of your marvelous foresight, your very superior discernment. It appears, then, that great detectives sometimes are blind. I trust that you had a delightful ocean voyage, my dear Mr. Carter, and that you will thoroughly enjoy our wonderful Paris. The same may apply to your two associates, also, who now are living incognito, two most amusing personations, in fact, in the Hotel de Calais. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting them, also, now that you have favored me with a visit."

Nick Carter was surprised, astounded, in fact, but he did not betray it. Figuratively speaking, nevertheless, one could have knocked him down with a feather. His every precaution had proved vain. His coming had been anticipated. His disguise was no disguise at all. The presence of Chick and Patsy, their location, the characters they had assumed, none of which was even suspected by Monsieur Bertillon—all had been discovered by Lucien Legarde.

But when? Where? How and by what means?

There flashed through Nick's mind one remark made by Monsieur Bertillon:

"Legarde thinks he is smarter than the police."

Nick Carter began to think so, too.

Legarde sat smiling and bowing, as if nothing at all remarkable had occurred.

Nick replied, without a change of countenance:

"It appears, then, that my visit was expected."

"Why, yes, to be sure," Legarde nodded.

"You speak as if you knew me, Legarde."

"So I do, my dear Carter, by name and reputation. Perfectly well, I assure you. You are Mr. Nicholas Car-

ter, the famous New York detective. Your features, too, are familiar to me. Your disguise is not an improvement."

Nick met him halfway. He removed his disguise and thrust it into his pocket.

"Ah!" Legarde exclaimed, chuckling. "This is better, much better. It proves to me that you now see no occasion for deception. I am delighted, charmed. I detest duplicity. I abhor deceit. I admire frankness, sincerity, man-to-man relations. Do have a cigar, my dear Carter."

Nick took one from a tray on the table. He turned slightly to reach for a match and deftly exchanged the cigar for—one he had in his pocket.

He was taking no chances with a cigar belonging to, and possibly loaded, poisoned, or in some way doctored by Monsieur Lucien Legarde.

Nick lit his own cigar deliberately. He wanted a few seconds in which to consider the altered situation. He realized more keenly than ever that he was up against an exceedingly clever man. Nick had approached him with assurance, had made his first aggressive move confidently, in so far as it went—and had been beaten at his own game.

This was an unusual experience for Nick Carter. He was not accustomed to defeat. He felt the sting of it. It was like a spur driven into the flesh of a thoroughbred. A momentary gleam, subtle, ominous, and threatening, appeared in the depths of his calm, cold eyes. It was like the gleam from a blade of steel. It was deadly, intense, yet was gone in an instant.

Nick decided in five seconds how best to meet the situation. He had sized up his man. He did not need the testimony of Monsieur Bertillon, nor the evidence submitted by Colonel Vance and Ivan Malakoff, to convince him that Lucien Legarde was a knave, a master crook, a rascal without a peer. He had detected in his blandishments the sinister sneer of a scamp, and in his laugh the scornful mockery and taunting assurance of an egotist.

Nick dropped his burned match into a cuspidor. Without a sign of what had passed through his mind, he said deliberately:

"Thank you, Legarde. You smoke very good cigars."

Legarde laughed quietly.

"How do you know, Mr. Carter?"

"Am I not smoking one?"

"You are smoking one of your own."

"You did not see me substitute it."

"True."

"Why, then, do you say so?"

"Because I know that no detective as clever and cautious as you, my dear Carter, would smoke the cigar of one said to be as crafty and dangerous as I," Legarde pointed out complacently. "Am I right? Ah, but you need not say so, for I know that I am."

"You reason shrewdly, Legarde," said Nick. "You know, then, that I am a New York detective?"

"Yes, positively."

"You also know, perhaps, when and why I came to Paris?"

"Perfectly well," said Legarde. "You left New York on the twenty-fifth of last month. Your two assistants followed you three days later by another line. You arrived in Paris on the second. You are quartered in the Rue de Clichy. You visited Monsieur Bertillon this morning, and met Colonel Arthur Vance, of London, and Monsieur Ivan Malakoff, the Russian deputy chief of police. All are acquaintances of mine. Observe, however, that I do not say friends of mine," Legarde added, laughing. "You have just come from the Palais de Justice."

Nick observed a telephone on a stand in one corner.

"Ah, I see," he murmured. "Confederates."

"Pardon me!" Legarde leaned forward in his chair. "I did not catch the last."

"It is not material," said Nick.

"To me—certainly not," replied Legarde.

Nick eyed him steadily.

Legarde met his searching scrutiny with a smile.

"You are, then, informed of my mission here?" questioned Nick.

"Perfectly."

"Would you object to stating it?"

"*Pardieu!* Far from it," said Legarde, laughing again. "It will give me infinite pleasure. You are here, my dear Carter, at the solicitation of Monsieur Bertillon. He hopes, with your help, if I may use an American term—to get me!"

"Ah!"

"Could anything be more absurd!" Legarde quickly added. "Could any project be less promising? Get me, indeed! Really, I find that most amusing. I am honored, nevertheless. Not often are such attentions paid one of my modest acquirements, my inoffensive nature, my simple life. I am filled with wonderment."

Nick saw plainly enough that this man's every remark was a covert boast. Finding him so communicative, however, he proceeded to make the most of it, and evoke all the scamp would impart.

"You give me cause for wonderment, also, Legarde," said he. "How did you obtain so much information?"

"About you?"

"Yes."

"And your mission?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, you must blame Monsieur Bertillon and the police for that," said Legarde, with a contemptuous shrug.

"Monsieur Bertillon—why so?"

"*Pardieu!* Must I explain to one as astute as you? To whom, indeed, when filled with false notions, baffled after a prolonged search for a supposed criminal, and finally having awakened to a realization of being unable to cope with so elusive an adversary—to whom, as a last resort, is application for aid invariably made?"

Nick did not reply.

Legarde went on glibly:

"Why, invariably, my dear Carter, to the famous New York detective, the peerless sleuth, whose efforts are always crowned with success, the master genius who never fails to get his man.

"Knowing this, and assuming that such an astute criminal exists, would he not keep himself constantly informed of the whereabouts of Nick Carter and his several assistants? *Sapristi!* It is a simple problem," added Legarde, laughing. "It is one you should have easily answered."

Nick smiled a bit grimly.

"You are complimentary, Legarde," said he. "I will not ask you to explain how all this was accomplished. It is not material. You spoke of false notions, however, and a supposed criminal?"

"Certainly! Of course!" replied Legarde. "I was presenting only a hypothetical case."

"Do you mean to imply, Legarde, that such a criminal does not exist, that he is not at this moment in this—well, in this city?"

The abrupt digression, the significance of which could not be mistaken, brought another ripple of laughter from Legarde.

"I hope, my dear Carter, that you will not become too personal," said he, with subtle aggressiveness.

"No, not more personal than you have been," replied Nick dryly. "You have not answered my question."

"I take pleasure in doing so," Legarde rejoined. "I know, of course, what you have been told concerning me. The police are responsible for it. Monsieur Bertillon is the victim of a delusion. Colonal Arthur Vance has hallucinations. Malakoff is a monkey. *Sacré!* Is it not absurd to suppose that I, already generously provided for, and with most enviable marriage prospects—is it not absurd to suppose that I would stray from the straight and narrow path? Such suspicions, my dear Carter, are abominable. I laugh at them, nevertheless. I laugh at the police, at Monsieur Bertillon, at Colonel Vance, at Malakoff, even at—but I will not say, my dear Carter, that I laugh at you. I really hope you will disabuse those blind fools of their delusions."

Nick Carter ignored the Frenchman's covert irony. It was a drop of water on a duck's back. He replied, after a moment, drawing up a little in his chair:

"Somebody is going to be disabused of their erroneous ideas, Legarde, before I leave Paris. I'm inclined to think that you are putting up what we Americans call a colossal bluff."

"Bluff! Pardon me. I do not know that word as you use it," said Legarde, with eyes narrowed slightly. "Bluff—that is a cliff, a precipice. No, I do not comprehend."

"It is not necessary that you should," Nick dryly answered. "You will comprehend, all right, after I have called you. Marriage prospects, did you say?"

"Ha! Yes, most enviable," cried Legarde, with an enthusiasm indicating that he willingly dropped the discussion of crime. "My lovely Lucille! There is none like her. Most enviable prospects! Most promising, my dear Carter, I assure you. That is—if Celeste does not interfere. If Celeste does not try to prevent me."

"Celeste?" questioned Nick tentatively.

"You do not know her, eh?" Legarde laughed, shaking his head and shrugging his shoulders. "It is that she-cat at the Thespia. She may bite. *Diablo!* Her teeth are sharp. Her claws are needles. She may both scratch and bite, unless I prevent it."

"Prevent it, Legarde?"

"*Pardieu*, yes! It may be imperative. I then shall clip her claws. I then shall muzzle her. I shall put her out of the way for—— Pardon! My tongue is running wild. Have I said too much, my dear Carter?" Legarde stopped short, with eyes gleaming.

"Too much?" Nick again questioned.

"About Celeste—*sapristi!* she is in my way. She is one grand obstacle. But you—ah, you are not like the others, those blind fools. You would not misjudge me."

"Misjudge you, Legarde?" said Nick, a bit sternly.

"*Sacré!*" Legarde exclaimed, casting away his cigarette. "You don't comprehend? Perdition! What if they had heard me? What if——"

"If—well?"

Legarde lurched forward with eyes burning, with brows knit, with both hands hard clenched on his knees. He went on with a more vicious asperity:

"If Mademoiselle Celeste were found dead—say, to-morrow night, in her apartments, in her automobile to the theater, or in her dressing room—*pardieu!* Would I not be suspected, accused, arrested, eh? That is to say, if those blind fools hard heard me. You are different, eh? You would not misjudge me, eh? If——"

"Stop right there, Monsieur Legarde," Nick interrupted.

Legarde had started to his feet, but the resentful blaze in his dark eyes did not deceive the detective.

Nick arose, confronting him, and placed his forefinger on the Frenchman's breast.

"That word, if, Legarde, is just as big as it ever was," said he, with ominous impressiveness. "If you think you can deceive me, you are mistaken. If you think I cannot read you, it is you who are deluded. Now, hark you! If the fatality occurs that you have mentioned, or covertly predicted, as I have heard you have done in previous cases; if that should come to pass, Legarde, as surely as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west—I'll get you for it! I'll trip you by the heels and lay your head upon the block. Take that from me, Monsieur Legarde."

For the fraction of a second, for the first time in his life, perhaps, Legarde shrank from the threatening eyes of an opponent.

"Mon Dieu!" he muttered. "That, Carter, sounds like a challenge."

"That, Legarde, is precisely what it is," said Nick sternly.

"Ha! I was right, then," Legarde cried, with lips twitching. "You have come here to get me. Hey, we shall see—we shall see! I laugh at you, too, then, Monsieur Carter. I laugh at you, and snap my fingers at you. But you are frank, you are bold, and I give you one warning: Don't tread on a rattlesnake."

"I come from the land of rattlers, Legarde, and know how to crush them," Nick retorted.

"Sapristi! You cross the ocean to get me, eh? Ha! I am honored." Legarde laughed loudly. "You challenge—and I accept! This makes life worth living. There will be something doing. Ha! We shall see—we shall see!"

CHAPTER III.

NICK'S MIDNIGHT VISIT.

"Meant it—yes, every word of it. He will, moreover, attempt to make good."

These declarations came from Nick Carter soon after his remarkable interview with Lucien Legarde. Nick had not prolonged it. He had hastened to the Hotel de Calais and joined Chick and Patsy in their apartments, and briefly informed them of all that he had learned about Legarde, as well as of his interview with the latter.

The amazement of Nick's two assistants may be imagined. That they were perplexed, as well, goes without saying. They agreed with Nick that they were up against a master crook, a rascal of exceeding cleverness.

It was also apparent that a continuation of their vain subterfuge was out of the question, and that new plans must be laid. Patsy came out of his disguise, donned garments more to his liking, and stowed away his female apparel in one of their several trunks.

Nick agreed with him, also, that in that respect the trick was off. It was early evening, when, discussing the fatality mentioned by Legarde, Nick expressed the foregoing opinion.

"Make good!" Chick echoed. "Do you mean——"

"That Legarde will attempt to kill the woman he mentioned—precisely."

"Celeste?"

"Yes."

"You think his threat, then, was not a bluff?"

"It was not exactly a threat," said Nick. "It was a prediction, one of the defiant utterances with which he already has prefaced several crimes."

"H'm, I see!"

"He is bold in that respect, and seems to find delight in mocking the police and displaying a spirit of covert daring and contempt. I'll take some of that out of him, Chick, as sure as death and taxes."

"Gee, that's the stuff, chief!" said Patsy bluntly. "Who is Celeste, anyway?"

"She is the star vaudeville attraction at the Thespia Theater, in the Rue Richer," said Nick. "I was reading about her in yesterday's *Figaro*. Her name is Celeste Durand. She is remarkably handsome, and has caught on strong. She is a high roller, however, and Legarde evidently is one of her intimate friends—and a very dangerous one."

"Gee, I should say so!"

"I'll soon find out what kind of a rat is in the meal."

"What are your plans?" Chick inquired.

"To prevent the crime, of course."

"And catch Legarde in the act of trying to commit it?"

"Precisely."

"That listens good to me, all right!" declared Patsy, slipping in his oar. "But Legarde will keep an eye on us, chief, or some of his hirelings, or confederates. He must have both, or he could not have got wise to all of our doings and designs."

"True," Nick allowed. "But now that we know just what we are up against, we will fool the rascal with some of our American methods. I'll never set foot in New York again, Patsy, if I let a bunch of French crooks get the best of me."

"That's the proper spirit, chief, for fair."

"We will start the ball rolling without delay," Nick added. "Fish me out another disguise, Patsy, and I'll fool any spy who may be watching these apartments."

"No sooner said than done, chief."

"I will vacate my quarters in the Rue de Clichy. I will make it a point to see Mademoiselle Celeste this evening. In the meantime, Chick, you secure a flat in some convenient locality, and we will occupy it to-night. Make sure, however, that no one gets wise."

"Leave that to me," said Chick.

"We'll contrive to have our trunks transferred to-morrow," Nick continued. "We will take new names and adopt a new disguise. I shall not return to-night. Leave a note for me in the office of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, fifty-three Rue Cambon, Chick, giving me the street and number of the flat you select. I will join you there to-morrow night."

"Good enough, Nick."

"What about to-night, chief?" questioned Patsy, impatient to get to work.

"There is nothing for you to-night," Nick replied. "After to-night—well, unless I am much mistaken, there will be enough doing to keep all of us busy."

It was eight o'clock when Nick departed. He made sure that the corridors and stairways were deserted, then left the house by an exit into the Rue de la Paix, where he quickly lost himself in the throng of people seeking the near restaurants and the boulevard cafés.

Four hours later, or immediately after midnight, a fashionably clad man might have been seen sauntering unsteadily through the Avenue Henri-Martin. He appeared to be somewhat intoxicated, and on his way home. He was singing audibly one of the latest hits in the Varieties.

He left the avenue and turned into the Rue de la Pompe. After covering about forty yards, he abruptly ceased singing, straightening up, and glancing back.

A gas lamp glimmering through the gloom here and there showed him that the street was deserted. He walked on more rapidly, presently crossing over, and a little later he hastened by an apartment house that appeared to be shrouded in darkness, and closed for the night.

Turning a corner, however, he quickly unlocked a gate and vanished into a small garden, where he sought a back door of the house, and chirped softly.

The door was immediately opened.

The starlight fell upon the darkly handsome face and captivating figure of a girl who had been waiting for him. She wore a loose, voluminious robe reaching to her ankles, and on her feet were a pair of worsted slippers.

"Mademoiselle Durand?" questioned the midnight visitor.

"Yes, monsieur," she whispered. "You are——"

"Nick Carter."

Celeste took his hand and led him into the entry, then conducted him to her apartments. The front room was in darkness. A lamp burned dimly in an interior room into which she led him. Not a ray of light could be seen from the Rue de la Pompe.

"I have followed the instructions given me," said Celeste, after quietly closing the door.

"You have done wisely," Nick replied.

"But what does it all mean? Be seated, sir. Why this secrecy, these precautions? Above all, why did Monsieur Bertillon telephone me?" questioned Celeste.

She had taken a chair near the table, where the light fell brighter on her face. The tint of rouge still was in her cheeks. A tinge of carmine was on her lips, and a line of black under her long lashes. The tinsel of the stage did not improve her under close inspection. She gazed with humid, questioning eyes at the detective, who now had removed his disguise.

Celeste looked a little surprised. She saw that he was even more attractive, more impressive a man, than she had thought.

"I want you to see me under true colors, Miss Durand, and to feel not only that you can trust me, but also that I am justified in what I have done, and am doing," said Nick. "Here is an order signed by Monsieur Bertillon, and giving me authority to act in such matters. Read it."

Celeste did so, and returned it.

"What need?" she asked tersely. "Monsieur Bertillon telephoned to me this evening. He directed me what to do, and said that you would come here to-night and explain. His word is sufficient, even if I did not know you by name and reputation."

"I shall be perfectly frank with you," Nick replied. "It was I who telephoned—not Monsieur Bertillon.

"You?"

"Yes—but only in order to seriously impress you, and to avoid approaching you openly."

"But why?"

"Because, Miss Durand, your life has been threatened," said Nick. "It is in danger—or would be, if I were not going to protect you."

Celeste was turning pale.

"My life!" she exclaimed. "Threatened by whom?"

"Do you know of any one who might wish to—well, to remove you?"

"Possibly; but only one."

"Lucien Legarde?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

"Something he said in my presence has convinced me that you are in danger," said Nick. "Do not ask me to explain. I am not here for that, but to ask you a few questions and give you further instructions. You must obey them, or—well, do you know Legarde?"

"Sufficiently well to fear him."

"Have you given him cause for enmity?"

"He thinks so."

"Tell me," said Nick, "have you and Legarde been lovers?"

"Yes," Celeste admitted. "But I have discarded him. I no longer love him. I despise him."

"Why?"

"I know something about him, which, if I were to disclose it—— But, no! I will not betray him," Celeste firmly declared. "I shall sue him, nevertheless, and recover the money that I have loaned him. He refuses to return it. I have threatened to sue, and Legarde no longer is my friend."

"Ah!" said Nick. "There would be no suit, then, if you were out of his way. Have you threatened, also, to interfere with his marriage prospects?"

"Marriage prospects?"

"Yes."

Celeste shrugged her shoulders and laughed derisively.

"His marriage prospects!" she exclaimed. "Monsieur Legarde marry, eh? Not much! That is not like him!"

"H'm! is that so?" said Nick. "He has aimed to mislead me, then. Who is Lucille? Do you know Lucille? He spoke of his love for her."

Celeste laughed again, and ran her fingers through her mop of raven-black hair.

"Lucile—yes," she replied, nodding. "*Sacré!* Who would not know her after having seen her? One look is enough—more than enough! She is the ugliest girl in Paris. Red hair, a pasty complexion, cross-eyed, false teeth, a string-bean figure—ha! Legarde marry her, eh? No, no, my dear Mr. Carter, never! Not to keep the heavens from falling!"

And Celeste fell to laughing again derisively, until her plump figure shook from head to foot.

All this meant much to the detective. Nick was quick to put two and two together. He began to suspect, as Legarde had deceived him concerning the cause of Celeste's antipathy, that he also had misrepresented his relations with Lucille, and that he had other designs than marriage.

"Who is this Lucille?" he inquired, when Celeste again became serious.

"Lucille Poisson," she replied. "I have heard that Legarde is her friend. But her lover—no, never! One can not love a fright, a scarecrow."

"Where does Mademoiselle Poisson live?" Nick inquired. "Can you tell me anything about her family?"

"She lives alone with her father, Monsieur Jean Poisson, in the Rue d'Ormonde. He is very rich. He is a collector of gems."

"Where is his place of business?"

"His house."

"Does he not keep a store?"

"No, monsieur." Celeste shook her head. "He is an expert judge of diamonds and other precious stones, and often buys for people on a commission, but his business is all done in his house. Lucille is his clerk, his accountant, his housekeeper, his—*sacré!* what is she not? Legarde marry her—ha! that is too absurd!"

Nick Carter's brows had knit slightly. He was, indeed, beginning to learn what kind of a rat was in the meal.

"Enough about her," he replied. "Now, Miss Durand, about yourself. I wish to be your friend. I would like to protect you. Do you think it worth while to accept my offer and follow my instructions?"

Celeste bowed quickly, then leaned forward and laid her jeweled hand on that of the detective.

"I will do so gladly," she said gratefully. "I will repay you, too."

"I want no payment," Nick replied. "I do, however, want you to follow my instructions to the letter."

"I will do so."

"Continued precautions are imperative."

"I understand you. Command me," said Celeste, with her large, luminous eyes fixed on the earnest face of the detective.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MALTESE CAT.

Nick Carter drew his chair a little nearer that of the French actress. He knew that she was deeply impressed. He saw that he could safely trust her. He repeated earnestly:

"Remember—my instructions must be rigidly followed."

"I shall remember," said Celeste. "Proceed."

"Do you live alone here?"

"I rent this flat, and keep only a maid. She is abed."

"To-morrow, when you leave the theater after the matinée," Nick began, "you will meet one of my assistants. His name is Patsy Garvan."

"Monsieur Garvan—I will keep it in mind."

"He will be in female attire. He will approach and greet you like an old acquaintance, one whom you have not recently seen. You must respond consistently. You must invite him to come here with you, and permit him to remain until to-morrow morning."

"I will do so," bowed Celeste. "I understand you perfectly. You want him here to protect me."

"If necessary."

"I am your debtor. Continue."

"Do you always go in an automobile from here to the theater?" Nick inquired.

"Every evening, yes."

"The same automobile and chauffeur?"

"Oh, no! I telephone for a taxicab."

"At what hour?"

"Seven o'clock."

"Do not telephone to-morrow night," Nick directed. "At seven o'clock, however, precisely as if you had done so, a cab will be at your door. After the performance it will be waiting for you near the stage door. It will be driven by another of my assistants, Chick Carter."

"Monsieur Chick—I will remember him, also," said Celeste.

"Now," Nick continued, "have you a gentleman friend on the stage, one of the theater hands would be best, in whom you can safely confide?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"The electrician—Monsieur Toulon."

"At what hour in the evening does he usually arrive at the theater?"

"Soon after seven."

"Will he do what you request?"

"Surely."

"Direct him, then, to pass the boulevard café in the Rue de la Paix at half past six to-morrow. Tell him to remove his hat when passing and wipe his forehead with his handkerchief."

"That you may recognize him?"

"Precisely."

"He will do so," said Celeste.

"Tell him that I will meet him a few moments later, and accost him like a friend," Nick went on. "He must greet me in the same way, then invite me to accompany him to the theater. That will give me access to the stage without arousing misgivings, in event of spies. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly," said Celeste. "I will make no mistake. You may be sure of that."

"Do you occupy a dressing room alone?" Nick then inquired.

"Yes."

"Who occupies the one adjoining it?"

"Madame Grosse, the contralto singer."

"A friend of yours?"

"A very dear friend."

"Without informing others, then, or permitting others to discover it, you must occupy her dressing room to-morrow evening. Can you do so?"

"Easily."

"I," Nick added, "wish to occupy yours."

"Ah, I see," Celeste exclaimed, smiling.

"You will not recognize me, however, and you must not betray any interest in what is taking place," Nick cautioned her.

"I will take no notice, none whatever."

"Is there a window in your dressing room, or more than one door, through which an assailant might enter, or contrive to harm you?"

"Window—dear me, no!" Celeste declared. "There is only the door entering it from a narrow corridor back of the stage. There is hardly ventilation. That, even, is mechanically supplied, like the lights and water. *Sacré!* it is a dismal hole, when one goes from the glare of the stage. There is a premium on fresh air in the dressing rooms of the Thespia."

"I will see for myself," said Nick. "You now understand all that I require of you?"

"Perfectly, monsieur."

"That is all, then, for to-night. I will leave by the way I entered. Conduct me as far as the door. My searchlamp will light us."

Celeste arose. Her eyes were glowing. There was a deeper red in her cheeks than the tint of the rouge. She approached Nick and laid her hands on his breast.

"May I thank you?" she murmured. "May I——"

"Hush!" Nick checked her, smiling. "There will be time enough for thanks when it is done."

It was one o'clock when he departed.

The following day saw the three detectives comfortably established in a furnished flat in the Rue Richelieu. Chick and Patsy were informed of Nick's interview with Celeste Durand, and knew what was expected of them. Each did the work laid out for him that evening.

Eight o'clock found Nick Carter seated alone in Mademoiselle Durand's dressing room in the Thespia Theater. It was a little room, about eight feet long and six feet wide. It was entered from a narrow passageway back of the stage, which was accessible from a stairway from the stage door. It was lighted by an incandescent lamp in a wire cage. A dressing stand was fixed to one of the walls.

Nick occupied the only chair, and the door was closed. He was thinking of the words uttered by Lucien Legarde.

"If found dead in her apartments, in her automobile to the theater, or in her dressing room—which of the three?" Nick was asking himself. "I have each well guarded. If he tries to make good, he must fail. The question is—will he make the attempt? He said—we shall see! He was right—so we shall!"

It did not appear probable to Nick that the dressing room would be selected for a murderous assault. It could not be easily approached by stealth through the corridor. There were numerous other dressing rooms near by. The corridor was nearly always occupied by some of the performers. There was a guard at the stage door. The stairway was seldom deserted. Under such conditions, it would appear that only a madman would seek the life of the actress.

Half past eight.

Nick could faintly hear the music of the orchestra. The performance on the stage had begun. The tread of feet in the corridor occasionally reached his ears, and the voices of persons passing his door.

The stillness in the room was broken only by a faint, far-away buzzing sound, hardly audible. It came through a small iron grating in one of the walls. From the same direction came a slight draft of air, which Nick already had noticed.

It was the artificial ventilation mentioned by Celeste. Fresh air from without was supplied to the numerous dressing rooms and other interior apartments by a system of pipes and a power blower. The faint buzzing sound heard by the detective was the whir of the distant blower.

Nick glanced at his watch.

Another half hour had passed.

It was nine o'clock.

"H'm, by Jove, that's strange!" Nick muttered.

He still was gazing at the face of his watch. He could not see the hands as distinctly as usual. He turned nearer to the suspended lamp and had better light, but it did not help him. He could not see plainly. A feeling of drowsiness was stealing over him.

He sprang up, with suspicions aroused. He felt the draft from the ventilator on his face. He turned to the

grating and inhaled a deep breath, then sniffed the air suspiciously. There was no odor.

Turning, he quietly opened the door and stepped out of the room. A maltese cat living in the theater, a pet of one of the stage hands, was approaching through the corridor.

Nick crouched and seized the animal by the scruff of the neck and thrust him into the dressing room. Then he closed the door and waited, standing near it.

Not a sound came from within.

Nick waited twenty minutes. He saw Celeste go from a dressing room and hasten to the stage. She was clad to do her turn. He could hear her singing a few moments later.

Presently, observing that the corridor was entirely deserted, Nick turned and opened the dressing-room door.

The tabby was lying on the floor.

Nick stepped into the room and drew a deep breath. A feeling of sleepiness instantly seized him. He lingered only to touch the motionless animal with his foot.

The maltese cat was dead.

CHAPTER V.

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

Nick Carter solved the mystery before leaving the theater that night. He remained with Monsieur Toulon, Celeste's friend, with whom he had come there, after all others had departed. The electrician assisted him.

Nick already suspected the crafty method and subtle means by which the murder of Celeste had been attempted. He confided his suspicion to Monsieur Toulon, who readily bound himself under a pledge of secrecy.

The electrician was perfectly familiar with the building, also with the ventilating system, and the investigations were easily and expeditiously made.

Nick began with tracing the air pipe from Celeste's dressing room, which was at one end of the corridor. This particular conduit, unlike any of the others, all of which were concealed within the walls, came through a partition dividing the theater from an office section of the same building.

Monsieur Toulon, after brief computation, was able to determine which of the business offices this same pipe supplied, and Nick's investigations then were carried into that part of the building. The office nearest Celeste's dressing room, from which it was divided by only a few feet of the partition, was found to be vacant.

Nick entered it with a picklock. There was no furniture in the room. On the floor, however, were the tracks of muddy boots, and indications of dampness, showing plainly enough that some one had recently been there.

"We are hot on the trail, Monsieur Toulon," Nick remarked. "A little earlier, and we might have caught the rascals. Only this wall, you think, divides this office from Celeste's dressing room?"

"I am sure of it, monsieur," said Toulon.

Nick began an examination of the wainscoted wall. He soon found that three of the panels had been deftly removed, and so left that they could be easily taken out again and replaced. Nick removed them, and found the evidence he was seeking. A hole a foot square had been cut through the plastering and laths. A portion of the ventilating conduit was exposed. It was made of tin, a pipe five inches in diameter, from which a piece had been carefully cut. This piece still was held in place, however, with a few wads of putty. The putty still was pliable.

Nick carefully removed it, and took out the piece of tin. He then flashed his searchlight into the pipe. Within easy reach inside was a small metal cup. Nick took it out and examined it. It was greasy, and the edges were covered with soot.

"See!" said he, showing it to Monsieur Toulon. "Some kind of a villainous drug, the fumes or gas from which will cause drowsiness and finally death, yet which operates too subtly to be detected, was burned in this air pipe last evening. The draft from the blower took the noxious gas, of course, only into Celeste's dressing room. It killed the maltese cat. If Celeste had been there, it would have killed Celeste."

Monsieur Toulon shuddered.

"Horrible! Fiendish!" said he, amazed at the keenness of the detective. "Who can have done such a deed?"

Nick did not inform him. Instead, he said gravely:

"We may learn later. You are to say nothing about it, mind you. The cat, pending my further investigation, must be supposed to have died from natural causes."

"I understand," said Toulon. "You can trust me."

Nick remained in the office, but sent Toulon to bring Patsy Garvan, whose presence no longer would be required in Celeste's apartments. While waiting, Nick replaced the metal cup, reputtied the piece of tin in the pipe, and then fitted the panels into the wainscot, leaving everything as he had found it.

It was nearly three o'clock when Toulon returned with Patsy.

Nick quietly informed Patsy of all that had transpired, and Patsy, in turn, reported that Chick had taken Celeste home in the cab he had hired for the evening, and that she knew nothing of what had occurred in her dressing room. Chick then had returned to their flat in the Rue Richelieu.

Nick knew that no further attempt to harm Celeste would be made that night, nor, in all probability, until the cause of this failure had been discovered.

"It's as plain as twice two," said he, while talking quietly with Patsy. "Legarde was here last evening, knowing precisely at what time Celeste would be in her dressing room. He planted the deadly drug in the air conduit, therefore, and left it burning, presumably having no doubt that it would do its deadly work."

"It settled the cat's hash, all right," said Patsy.

"True. All of the preparations in this office must, of course, have been previously made."

"Sure thing, chief!"

"Legarde has, as I have told you, an extensive knowledge of drugs and chemicals. That used to-night was probably somewhat like a sulphur candle. The metal cup shows that it burned itself out, thus precluding an analysis. I have sent for you, Patsy, for only one reason."

"Namely?"

"Legarde, or his confederates, if he had any in this job, will come here to find out why the plot miscarried. He may think that the drug failed to burn, or was somehow extinguished.

"I have suppressed all of the facts, and he will have no reason to suppose that his crime has been discovered. Sooner or later, then, as I have said, he will come here, or some confederate, to make an investigation."

"I'm to remain here, then, and watch for him?" questioned Patsy.

"Not here, but concealed in the corridor," said Nick. "I do not wish to arrest him at present. We must find out whether others are in league with him. Shadow him, therefore, or whoever comes here, instead of making any arrest."

"I'm wise," said Patsy. "That's the best move, chief."

"After breakfast," Nick added, "I will send Chick to relieve you. You two must alternate in watching this office. It must be watched day and night until we get our man, or men, and secure all of the evidence we require."

"That's the stuff, chief!" said Patsy. "I'll hang round here till Chick shows up—barring my quarry comes first. In that case, chief—— Well, leave him to me. You'll hear from me later."

Nick nodded approvingly, and departed with Monsieur Toulon.

It then was nearly four o'clock. The night was far gone—but it had been well spent, for a dastardly crime had been prevented.

Patsy returned to the flat at nine o'clock that morning, leaving Chick to continue the espionage. There had been no visitor to the vacant office in the Thespia Building.

Nick then directed Patsy to quietly find out by whom the office had been rented, or whether it was merely one that happened to be vacant. The latter seemed improbable.

At precisely noon that day, wearing the same disguise as when he called on Lucien Legarde, Nick appeared in the Boulevard Montmartre and sauntered by Legarde's apartments, on the opposite side of the street. As he expected, he was seen and followed.

He came face to face with Legarde in the Champs Elysées, a quarter hour later. Legarde, fashionably clad and swinging a slender cane, quickly approached him.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, confronting Nick with a decidedly sinister smile. "We meet again, Monsieur Carter. It is an unexpected pleasure."

"No doubt," said Nick dryly. "You would hardly have known where to find me, Monsieur Legarde, if I had not walked by your apartments."

"*Pardieu!* There is some truth in that," said Legarde, with a grin. "You have left the Rue de Clichy."

"Yes."

"Your assistants no longer are in the Hotel de Calais."

"No."

"Why the sudden change?"

"Changes are good for one's health," said Nick pointedly.

Legarde laughed, but there was no mirth in it.

"One may jump out of a frying pan into the fire," he replied, with obvious significance.

"Possibly."

"Where are you now living?"

"I will send you my card when prepared to receive visitors," said Nick.

"Ah!" and Legarde laughed again. "I lost track of you, of all three, in fact, when you moved," he coolly admitted.

"Your eyes are not sharp," said Nick. "You need glasses, Legarde."

"I begin to think so. I am not accustomed, however, to chasing fleas. You are very elusive," said Legarde, grinning again and shaking his head.

"That is consistent with my calling," Nick replied. Then he carelessly added: "By the way, I have seen nothing in the morning newspapers about the fatality you mentioned—or, perhaps, predicted."

"You may omit the perhaps, Monsieur Carter," said Legarde, with sharper scrutiny.

"Yes? I thought as much."

"I knew that you would."

"Ah!"

"You see that I am perfectly frank."

"Yes, very," said Nick. "But Mademoiselle Celeste is still living, or, at least, her death has not been published. What was the trouble? Did your plans miscarry? Did something, or somebody, block your designs? Or did you not make the attempt? Really, Monsieur Legarde, you are not sustaining your reputation."

Legarde beat his sharply creased trousers with his cane.

"My reputation will stand, my dear Carter, in spite of anything you can do," he said coldly. "As a matter of fact, however, I had other fish to fry."

"Ah, that explains it," Nick replied. "I had begun to think I was right."

"In what, eh?"

"In that you were only bluffing," said Nick. "I felt, in fact, quite sure of it. Good morning, Monsieur Legarde. I must be going."

Nick stepped by him, with the last, and walked briskly away. He had scored several points, which was what he had set out to accomplish.

He saw that Legarde was perplexed, that he did not know where the three detectives were quartered. Nick saw, too, that he did not know why his murderous scheme had miscarried, that he did not believe that Nick had discovered his attempt, much less prevented it. These points were precisely in accord with the detective's wishes.

Nick suspected that Legarde would follow him and try to trail him to his new quarters. Without once looking back, moreover, Nick confirmed this by means of a pocket mirror. He then proceeded to elude the rascal.

Five minutes later he entered the vast Parisian department store—the Bon Marché. He mingled with the throng of people within, and again discovered that Legarde still was on his track.

Nick sauntered here and there, apparently oblivious to the espionage, and presently paused at a counter near one of the elevators. He waited until it was just about to ascend, then he turned quickly and entered it. The attendant closed the grating, and the lift shot upward.

When Nick left it at the third floor, he was literally transfigured. He had changed his disguise for an entirely different one.

Descending a near stairway a few seconds later, he met Legarde coming up.

Legarde did not recognize him.

He was hurrying. His eyes were gleaming viciously. His lips were twitching. He paused on the third floor and looked sharply in all directions. He looked in vain. He was disappointed, disgusted, filled with chagrin and wrath. He betrayed it in his actions, as well as his looks. He broke his slender cane and threw away the pieces.

Nick briefly watched him, laughing in his sleeve.

"Unless I get him, by Jove! he'll soon be after me with blood in his eye," he said to himself. "He already would give a year of his life, I'll wager, for the privilege of slipping a knife between my ribs, or a poison tablet into

my coffee. He certainly is nothing, that chap, if not a devil."

Nick lunched with Patsy in Prunier's, in the Rue Duphot. They satisfied themselves chiefly with oysters, which were lusciously prepared and served. They could not go the famous snails."

Nick dined with Chick at six in the Café de Paris.

One or the other, Patsy or Chick, was constantly watching the vacant office in the Thespia Building.

The day had brought no developments in that quarter.

Chick drove Mademoiselle Celeste to and from the theater that evening. She was kept constantly advised by the detective.

Nick watched her apartment house in the Rue de la Pompe until long after midnight. He watched in vain. There was nothing doing.

The following morning, however, heaped Pelion upon Ossa. Nick had just finished dressing for breakfast, when a telephone call from Monsieur Bertillon, who had been secretly informed of the residential change made by the detectives, brought somewhat startling news.

Briefly stated:

The house of Monsieur Jean Poisson had been entered during the previous night. His library safe had been opened, and diamonds and other costly gems stolen, worth in American money about eighty thousand dollars.

"How and by whom the crime was committed is a mystery," Monsieur Bertillon added. "There is one clew, however, in that his daughter, Lucille Poisson, is known to have been on friendly terms with Lucien Legarde. For that reason, Nick, I am informing you immediately, and I suggest that you visit the house."

"I will do so, and make an investigation," Nick replied.

"You will be joined there by two detectives from the prefecture of police. They are Donnier and Tagart. I have told them you will be there. They will await your directions."

"Very good."

"They may, moreover, be trusted. The robbery was discovered only a few minutes ago. Will you leave soon?"

"I will go immediately."

"The house is seventy-seven Rue d'Ormonde."

"Enough said," cried Nick. "I must be on my way."

CHAPTER VI.

A MYSTERIOUS ROBBERY.

"Other fish to fry!" thought Nick, as he hung up the receiver. "I'll wager, now, that Monsieur Legarde has fried his other fish. This is why he was making love to a scarecrow."

Nick aroused Chick, who had been relieved by Patsy at four o'clock that morning, and briefly told him what he had learned and intended doing. Then, taking a cab, he [illegible] to the Poisson residence, seventy-seven Rue d'Ormonde.

It was an attractive stone house, somewhat back from the street. There was a plot of greensward in front. A high picket fence of iron divided it from the sidewalk.

Back of the house was a garden, with a few fruit trees and a grape arbor, in which hung velvety clusters of the luscious fruit. The garden was divided from a side street by a high brick wall.

Monsieur Poisson, an excitable, rotund little man of fifty, with curly gray hair, was waiting on the front steps of the house, when Nick alighted from the cab, immediately dismissing it.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried, hastening to open the picket gate. "Thank Heaven you have come! You are——"

"Monsieur Valior, from the police headquarters," Nick interrupted. "You are Monsieur Poisson."

"Yes, yes, to be sure! Come in!" Monsieur Poisson fairly dragged Nick into the house. "I have been robbed. Mysteriously robbed. My diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and a chest of money! My safe has been opened——"

"One moment, monsieur," Nick again interposed. "Permit me to get at the circumstances in my own way. It will expedite matters. Let me question. You merely answer."

Monsieur Poisson subsided.

Nick speedily learned all that the other could tell him.

The safe, the house, every door and window, the picket gate—all had been closed and locked, as usual, the previous night. No disturbance had been made. No crime was suspected. Nothing was supposed to be wrong until his daughter, coming down from her chamber that morning, had found the library safe open, the gems and money chest gone.

The house door and windows still were closed and locked.

Even more remarkable, more mysterious, the safe had been opened by means of the combination.

There was no other evidence left by the thieves, no tracks of soiled boots, no sign of a break, no indication that any window or door had been tampered with, not a clew worth mentioning, in fact.

Nick soon convinced himself upon all of these points, and he then returned with Monsieur Poisson to the library, where he carefully inspected the safe. He saw very quickly that it must have been opened by some one informed of the combination.

"Tell me," said he, turning to the waiting and watching gem collector. "Who locked the safe last night?"

"I did, monsieur, as usual," Monsieur Poisson asserted. "I never fail to be sure it is closed and locked before going to bed."

"You scattered the combination?"

"I am positive."

"Who knows the numbers?"

"Only my daughter, Lucille, and myself."

"Where is Mademoiselle Lucille?"

"Clearing the breakfast table. She will come. I will call her."

"Wait," said Nick. "I will presently see her. You say that a chest of money was stolen. Was that also in the safe?"

"Yes, monsieur, and locked."

"What kind of a chest?"

"One made of iron. It is a foot long, eight inches wide and deep, and was quite heavy. It fitted this compartment."

Monsieur Poisson pointed to a vacant space in the safe.

"Was it too heavy for you to easily carry far alone?" Nick inquired.

"*Mon Dieu!* Yes. I could only take it out upon the floor."

"The daughter, then, could not have lugged it away," thought Nick. Then, aloud: "Have you any suspicion, Monsieur Poisson, of the identity of the thieves?"

"No, no, Monsieur Valior, not the slightest," was the

reply. "I am all at sea. I am in the dark. My daughter and I—we alone know the combination."

"So you have said."

"I would not, of course, rob myself," Monsieur Poisson forcibly added. "And Lucille—ah, she is honest, she is true, she is the soul of virtue! I cannot explain it. I am all in the dark."

"Did you have any visitor last evening?" Nick questioned.

"No, monsieur."

"Or the night before?"

"Neither. We have very few evening visitors, only near neighbors."

"All good friends and trustworthy, of course?"

"*Mon Dieu!* Yes!"

"Monsieur Legarde," said Nick tentatively. "When was he last here?"

"Monsieur Legarde?"

"You know him, of course?"

"I may—but do not recall the name," said Monsieur Poisson, perplexed.

"Lucien Legarde?" said Nick.

"You do not mean——"

"Yes, the man you have in mind," put in the detective, when Monsieur Poisson hesitated doubtfully. "That is whom I mean. A man whose name is often associated with crime, a man who, though suspected, the police have not been able to corner and convict."

"I know—I know!" Monsieur Poisson exclaimed. "But he never comes here—never! A visitor here, indeed! Monstrous!"

"I have reason to believe, nevertheless," said Nick, "that your daughter is acquainted with him."

"Lucille—impossible!"

"I can assert, even, that they are very good friends. They lunch and dine in company——"

"Absurd! You wrong her, insult her!" Monsieur Poisson excitedly protested. "Lucille friendly with that man—impossible! Utterly impossible! She——" he broke off abruptly.

Mademoiselle Poisson had appeared at the library door.

Nick saw at a glance that Celeste had not exaggerated her plainness.

For Lucille was a slender, scrawny woman, in the twenties, with sloping shoulders, a long neck, an utterly unattractive figure. Her hair was shockingly red, her complexion sallow, her features irregular, with a receding forehead and chin—a face denoting exceeding weakness of character, though neither viciousness nor lack of virtue.

"Great Scott!" thought Nick, instantly recalling Celeste's description. "A scarecrow, indeed! Compared with her, a hedge fence is a dream!"

That Lucille had heard most that was said just before she entered appeared in her first words.

"Oh, no, it is not impossible, papa," she cried, with a toss of her head. "It is, on the contrary, perfectly true."

"True!" gasped Monsieur Poisson, staring.

"True! I know Monsieur Legarde—I have known him for weeks," Lucille went on. "I have met him and dined with him."

"*Mon Dieu!* Horrible!"

"Pshaw! Don't be so shocked, papa," Lucille protested. "Many men of whom ill is spoken are good men. Monsieur Legarde is one, I am sure. I have eyes. I can read him. He treats me like a lady. He loves me——"

"Worse, and more of it!" groaned Monsieur Poisson.

"You must not say so, papa!"

"But——"

"Enough of this," Lucille interrupted. "I am of age, and know my mind. Monsieur Legarde would not, nor could he, have had any hand in this robbery. That at least is absurd! What do you think, Monsieur Valior?"

"I think," said Nick, "that I would like to ask you a few questions."

"Certainly," Lucille exclaimed, approaching him. "As many, monsieur, as you wish."

Nick began at once to question her closely. He soon found, however, that she either was absolutely ignorant concerning the crime, and innocent in every respect, or that she was covering her guilt with a most artful and marvellous assumption of simplicity.

Monsieur Poisson stood aghast while he listened.

Nick had continued his inquiries for about ten minutes, when the stopping of a cab outside announced the arrival of the two detectives mentioned by Monsieur Bertillon.

Nick immediately came to a quick decision. He turned to Monsieur Poisson and said:

"Here are two of my associates, monsieur, and I shall turn the case over to them."

"To them, monsieur?"

"Yes. They will, I feel sure, do all that can be done. I will go out and tell them how I regard it. They then will take up the work."

Nick did not wait for an answer. He hastened out and intercepted the two detectives at the picket gate. It took him only a few moments to tell them what he had heard from Monsieur Bertillon, also that he had made merely a cursory investigation, and decided to take no further part in the case.

Both detectives received his information politely, then hastened into the house.

Nick walked rapidly away.

He had apparently dropped the matter; but only—apparently.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANGLE OF REFLECTION.

Nick Carter, though he walked rapidly away, did not go far from the Poisson residence. He had an object in pretending to have dropped the case. He saw more keenly and reasoned more shrewdly than any other observer.

"Poor girl!" he muttered. "One as ugly as she, yet with all of a woman's aspirations, has little to hope for. He treats her like a lady, eh? Loves her—humph! Absurd, indeed, as Celeste asserted. That rascal has imposed upon her only in order to pull off this robbery. Either he has inveigled her into becoming his confederate, which seems quite improbable, or else he has duped her in some crafty way. We shall see! It's dollars to doughnuts that he will soon attempt to learn who is on the case, and what is suspected."

Nick walked on until he was well out of view from the house, then changed his disguise for another with which he was provided, punched his soft felt hat into a different shape, and then leisurely retraced his steps.

Making sure he was not observed, he turned into the side street and followed the high brick wall flanking the garden back of the house. It hid him from view. Thirty

yards brought him to a point where the drooping branches of a pear tree overhung the wall and admirably served his purpose.

He seized the capstone and quickly scrambled to the top of the wall, over which he dropped, and found himself within ten feet of the grape arbor mentioned. Seeking the shelter of it, he quickly concealed himself amid the luxuriant foliage.

It was a vantage point enabling him to watch the back of the Poisson residence, as well as the entire garden and the dwelling in the rear. There were several less pretentious wooden houses fronting on the next street, each with a small garden in the rear, as are found in many of the residential parts of Paris.

Nick was, however, expecting no immediate developments. He was prepared for a long vigil, if necessary, and he settled himself comfortably amid the foliage and waited.

An hour passed.

Donnier and Tagart, accompanied by Monsieur Poisson, came out of the house and carefully inspected the rear grounds, the gravel walk leading around the house, and another leading to a gate in the back fence, which divided the garden from that of a dwelling directly in the rear. They were seeking for footprints, but evidently found none, nor any evidence shedding a ray of light upon the mystery.

They returned to the house, and a little later Nick saw Donnier depart in a cab Not until after ten o'clock, however, did he see any sign of Lucille.

Soon after ten, a lace curtain at one of the back chamber windows was drawn aside and fastened. The slender figure of the girl was visible for a moment, while she closed the window and removed a pair of pillows from a near chair.

"She is making her bed," thought Nick. "That evidently is the room she occupies. She does the housework, and—— H'm! what was that?"

A bright spot had passed swiftly across the rear wall of the house.

It came and went in an instant.

It appeared to Nick to have been a circular spot of light several inches in diameter. It was like the bright spot cast on a screen by a magic lantern. It had fallen distinctly on the rear wall of the house, which was in shadow, the dwelling facing nearly east, with the sunlight striking full on the front of it.

Presently, while Nick still was wondering what had caused it, it again appeared on the darker wall. It now moved less rapidly. It darted from side to side for a few seconds, however, and then became less distinct, as it stopped squarely upon—the window of Lucille's chamber.

"Ah, I have it!" Nick muttered. "It's the reflection from a mirror, in the hand of some person in the house, or garden, to the rear of this one. By Jove! this smacks of a signal, or—yes, by gad, that's just what it is!"

Turning, Nick had peered through the foliage toward the house in the rear. It was about thirty yards away. The sunlight fell upon its back wall and windows, of course, the reverse of the Poisson residence. The curtain of one of the second-story windows was raised to the roller, letting the sunlight enter the room.

Somewhat back from the window, the crouching figure of a man was partly visible to the detective. He was holding an ordinary hand mirror at the proper angle for the sun's reflection from it to enter Lucille's window.

Nick could see his slender, white hand quite plainly.

He could see his face, also, though less distinctly.

It was the face of—Lucien Legarde!

Nick's features hardened slightly. He was congratulating himself, nevertheless, that he had made a very proper move at the proper time. He crouched lower under the overhanging grape vines and waited, glancing again in the direction of Lucille's window.

He had not long to wait. Scarce half a minute had passed, when Lucille suddenly appeared at the window. The reflection lighted her face for a moment, and then she quickly drew back and dropped the lace drapery and disappeared.

Nick continued to wait and watch.

"There soon will be something doing," he said to himself. "This looks very much, by Jove, as if the girl has conspired with this rascal to rob her father. In that case, I certainly did not read her face correctly. It is weak enough, for fair, but I did not size her up as being capable of crime, or even of vicious inclination.

"There never is any telling, however, what a woman will do for a man. She evidently is so deeply infatuated with him that she has cast honor and morality to the winds, or else—— Ah, there she comes!"

Lucille had emerged from the back door of the house.

She had thrown a light worsted shawl over her head and shoulders. She closed the door quietly, without glancing back, and then she hastened down the gravel walk leading to the gate in the fence.

"It was a signal, all right," thought Nick. "She is stealing out to join Legarde in the other house. She must be in league with him, then, or—— Well, well, by Jove, I'm not so sure of it!"

Nick had made another discovery.

Lucille had come nearer, was passing within ten feet of him, was walking rapidly along the gravel path, deviating neither to the right nor left; but her face was absolutely expressionless and her eyes were—closed!

Nick watched her.

She passed out of the gate, closing it after her, then quickly crossed the adjoining garden and entered the back door of the rear house.

Nick glanced up at the second-story window.

Legarde had disappeared.

"That, by Jove, sheds new light on the crime and upon her conduct!" Nick muttered, with brows ominously knit. "Figured successfully in the French hospitals, has he? Served as a hypnotist for serious operations, eh? That does settle it! He is an accomplished knave, all right, and a prince of plotters. This girl is not his confederate, but his dupe. He has her completely under hypnotic control."

Nick now turned his entire attention to the house in the rear. Both Legarde and Lucille had disappeared. He could discover no one at any of the windows. He had, from the first, seen only Legarde.

"I will take a chance," he muttered.

Stealing from his concealment, Nick quickly crossed the garden and vaulted the back fence. Several rows of high currant bushes then afforded him shelter. He crept back of them, darted nearer to the house, and in a moment was crouching under a clump of lilacs near one of the side windows.

Fortune had favored him. Dame Chance had guided him under a window of the room in which Legarde and the girl then were seated. The voice of the man immediately fell upon the detective's ears.

"Now, Lucille, tell me," he was saying, "what did you remember this morning about what you did last night?"

"Nothing, monsieur," Lucille replied. "My mind was a blank."

"As I commanded?"

"Yes, as you commanded."

"You did not leave your room during the night."

"No, monsieur. I did not leave my room."

"You heard nothing?"

"Nothing, monsieur."

"But this morning when you came down—you now remember all that transpired?"

"I do not know——"

"I command you to remember!" Legarde's cold, incisive voice took on a sharper ring.

"Ah!" Lucille exclaimed quickly. "I now remember."

Nick parted the lilac branches and cautiously peered into the room.

Lucille was sitting bolt upright on a plain, wooden bench. Her hands rested on her knees. Her nerves and muscles appeared to be tense, as if under an abnormal strain. Her face, as void of expression as that of a snow image, was turned toward Legarde. Her eyes still were closed.

Legarde was standing in the middle of the room. He was confronting her, with one open hand extended toward her, the palm turned downward, the fingers rigid.

Nick could see his face only in profile, but the glint in his steadfast eyes, the downward drawing of his lips, his intense expression—all convinced the detective that he was right, that Lucille was absolutely unconscious and under the hypnotic power of Lucien Legarde.

"You now remember—that is well, Lucille," said he. "I command you—tell me all that has transpired. Forget nothing. Omit no detail. Tell me!"

Lucille began, and told him, describing every circumstance, including every detail, repeating all of the conversation held in her presence, from the moment she discovered the robbery until she left home, ten minutes before.

Legarde's brows knit closer while he listened. A look of diabolical hatred settled upon his white, clean-cut features. He was thinking of Nick Carter.

"The name of the first detective, you say, Lucille, was—Monsieur Valior?" he questioned.

"Monsieur Valior—yes," said Lucille.

"You are sure of that, eh?"

"I am sure of it."

"It was he who mentioned my name, who exposed our relations, who told your father of our love? You are sure of that?"

"I am sure," Lucille repeated vacantly.

"He came from the police headquarters?"

"That is what he said."

"I do not know him, this Valior. I do not recall that name."

"Another was Donnier."

"I know him."

"The third was Tagart."

"And him—I know him," Legarde repeated. *"Pardieu!* I have good reason."

"That is all," said Lucille, as if wearied.

"And that is enough—enough, indeed!"

Legarde snapped his fingers, and made a swift pass with both hands in her direction, and the girl arose to her feet.

"Go! Leave at once!" Legarde commanded. "Return as you came. You remember nothing—I command you! You are mine until you reach your door. If you are seen, or met on the way, you have been here only to see a friend, Madame Didot, been here only to tell her about the robbery. You hear me, Lucille?"

"I hear you, Monsieur Legarde."

"You understand me?"

"I understand you, monsieur."

"You will obey?"

"I will obey. I remember only your commands."

"Go!" Legarde snapped his fingers sharply.

Lucille turned and hurried from the room, leaving the house by the rear door.

Nick Carter still peered through the branches of the lilacs.

Legarde strode across the room to a back window. He stood watching Lucille until she disappeared into her home. Then, seizing his hat and turning to a cupboard on the kitchen wall, for it was in the kitchen that the interview had occurred, he took a revolver from a shelf and thrust it into his pocket.

Nick Carter crouched lower under the lilacs.

"He is about to go," he muttered. "Will he leave by the back door and come out through the yard, or by the front? If by the back, I must be seen, and—— Well, that will end it!"

Nick shifted a revolver to his side pocket, and waited.

Thirty seconds passed, and he then heard the bang of the front door. A moment later he saw Legarde hurrying up the street.

CHAPTER VIII.

NICK CARTER'S EXPERIMENT.

"Madame Didot," thought Nick, recalling the name Legarde had mentioned. "She must live here, must be an acquaintance of Lucille, since the girl could consistently come here to tell her of the robbery. Madame Didot, eh? What is she to Legarde—or he to her?"

Since watching this house from the Poisson garden, and in view of all that had just transpired, Nick felt very sure that Madame Didot was absent and that the house then was deserted. Nick began to suspect, moreover, that it had been used by the robbers the previous night, and that it was the home of one or more of Legarde's confederates.

Nick determined to take immediate advantage of what he had seen and heard, therefore, and in a way none other would have hit upon. No layman knew more than he about hypnotism, nor possessed a more powerful and concentrative mind, with which to have influenced the extremely susceptible and pliable subject already dominated by the will of another.

The use of a mirror by Legarde, moreover, now appealed to Nick with entirely new significance. He no longer regarded it as a signal. He knew how a bright object, a glittering disk, a crystal sphere, or any like article, may sometimes be used to affect a pliable subject and instantly bring him under hypnosis, even when used at a distance.

Nick now rightly inferred that Legarde had frequently employed the mirror for the same purpose, that of instantly throwing Lucille into a hypnotic trance and causing her to come to this house, where he doubtless had been waiting to catch her at the window of her sleeping room that morning.

"The effect may be the same, by Jove, if I use it," Nick said to himself. "She is mentally weak, though not morally, and is so pliable a subject that the sight of it may have the same effect upon her as if Legarde was here. She has been so recently under his control, moreover, that she may yield the more readily. The experiment is well worth trying, since the coast appears to be clear."

Nick had arisen again and looked into the kitchen. There was no sign of life, no sound from within. Stealing around to the back door, he found that he could open it.

Legarde had forgotten to lock it.

Stepping into the kitchen, Nick listened briefly, then stole through the adjoining hall and up the stairs. The door of a back chamber was open. The window curtain still was fully raised. The sun shone bright into the room. The mirror was lying on a bed, where Legarde had carelessly tossed it.

Nick took it immediately and crouched on the floor. He could see the window of Lucille's room distinctly—but not Lucille.

It took Nick only a few moments to hit the proper angle by which to throw the reflection on the rear wall of the Poisson residence, and he could plainly see the bright spot of light as it danced across the house.

"Ah, by Jove, she is in the kitchen," he suddenly muttered. "She had resumed her housework. As well test her in that room as the other."

Nick had caught sight of the girl near one of the kitchen windows.

As quick as a flash, he tipped the mirror slightly and shot the spot of light straight into the distant room.

It revealed Lucille still more distinctly.

Nick saw the girl stop short, then turn and stare toward him, pressing her hands to her brow. Then she approached the window, still gazing intently, while Nick held the mirror motionless—and then she turned abruptly and disappeared.

Nick waited and watched.

Nearly a minute passed.

Then the back door of the distant house was opened—and out came Lucille. She had the same shawl thrown over her head and shoulders. She hastened, as before, straight across the garden toward the gate in the back fence.

"Eureka!" Nick muttered, with much satisfaction. "The experiment thus far is a success. Now to meet her in the kitchen, where Legarde evidently met her. If her eyes are closed and the hypnosis complete, she may respond to my questions as readily and truthfully as to his."

Nick hastened down to the kitchen.

Lucille entered a few moments later, with her eyes closed and the same vacant expression on her unattractive face.

Nick at once addressed her, imitating as nearly as possible the voice of Legarde, at the same time concentrating his mind upon her and the probable scenes of the previous night, in which he felt sure she had figured, and about which he designed to question her.

"I have summoned you here again, Lucille," said he, with his hand extended and his gaze fixed upon her. "It is Legarde who speaks, Legarde who commands you."

The girl hesitated for the fraction of a second, then answered vacantly:

"Legarde commands me and I obey."

"Sit down," Nick directed.

Lucille obeyed, and took the chair from which she had arisen about a quarter hour before.

Nick confronted her, with the same attitude and mien that he had observed in Legarde.

"Now, Lucille, I am going to question you, and you must answer," said he.

Lucille now replied more readily:

"I will answer, monsieur."

"Tell me, Lucille," said Nick, "at what hour did we meet last night? You remember—I command you!"

"At one o'clock, Monsieur Legarde."

"Where?"

"At my kitchen door, monsieur, as you had directed."

"Was I alone, Lucille?"

"No, monsieur."

"Who was with me?"

"Monsieur Didot was with you, and Monsieur Frochard."

"Three in all?"

"Three in all, monsieur."

"What followed, Lucille?"

"We went into the library, Monsieur Legarde."

"And then?"

"You commanded me to open the safe."

"You obeyed?"

"I obeyed, monsieur."

"What then was done, Lucille?"

"You took away the money chest and the jewels, with the help of Didot and Frochard. That was all."

"Where did we take them?"

"I do not know."

"Tell me—I command you to remember!" Nick insisted.

"I do not know," Lucille repeated.

"Tell me what more you do know, Lucille."

"I can tell you only what I saw and heard and did."

"Tell me. I am waiting."

"I saw you leave my home with Didot and Frochard," said Lucille. "You went toward the home of Monsieur Didot. I then locked my kitchen door, as you commanded, and returned to my bed."

"That is all you remember, Lucille?"

"All, monsieur."

"It is all that you can tell me?"

"That is all, Monsieur Legarde."

Then, from behind, came a sudden startling interruption—the sharp, incisive voice of Lucien Legarde himself.

"Surely, my dear Carter, that should be enough! I will tell you what more you wish to know—and then something!"

Nick Carter swung round like a flash.

Legarde, with arms folded, was standing near the open door leading into the hall.

By his side stood two dark-featured, sinister-eyed men in the thirties, each with a revolver aimed point-blank at the detective's breast.

"Do not stir, Monsieur Carter," said Legarde. "It would be a pity to kill so clever a man without giving him time to pray."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRAILERS.

There were reasons why Lucien Legarde and his two confederates appeared in the house of Didot so unexpectedly to Nick Carter, resulting in the turn of affairs described.

At ten o'clock that morning, after nearly two days of constant watching either by Chick or Patsy, their vigil in the Thespia Building was rewarded. It occurred purely by chance, however, just at a time when Chick had come to relieve Patsy for a few hours, and both, therefore, had the satisfaction of taking a hand in what followed.

They were standing under a stairway, from which they could see the door of the vacant office in which the murder of Celeste Durand had been attempted, and Chick was quietly telling Patsy of the Poisson robbery and where Nick had gone, when a man left the elevator, and, after glancing sharply around, quickly approached the office door.

The man was—Gaston Didot.

Patsy was the first to see him.

"Easy!" he whispered, touching Chick's arm. "The game breaks cover."

Chick instinctively drew farther under the stairs.

"A man is entering that office," murmured Patsy, watching. "He's in, now, and has closed the door."

"Legarde?" questioned Chick tersely.

"No. He's a bit younger man than Legarde, and not as well built."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"We'll wait," said Chick. "We'll see where the trail will lead."

They waited about ten minutes. Didot then came out of the office and left the building—with both detectives after him.

"We will separate," said Chick, after they reached the street. "You take the opposite side. I'll trail him from behind."

"I'll not lose sight of you—nor of him," replied Patsy, and a moment later he darted across the street.

Didot headed for a wine shop in the next street. He entered, and joined a man who was seated at one of the small tables—Louis Frochard.

Patsy signaled Chick to wait, then slipped into the wine shop almost on the heels of Didot. He heard the greetings of the two men, and, while sipping a glass of wine at a near counter, he also heard what immediately passed between them.

"Ha! *Bon jour!*" cried Frochard. "You are here at last, Didot?"

"Yes, Frochard. I could not come earlier," replied Didot, taking a chair.

"Your wife?"

"Hey! No. My wife is visiting her sister in Versailles."

"Ah!"

"I always send her to Versailles when—well, you know, my dear Frochard."

"When you have other visitors, eh?" laughed Frochard.

"Yes," grinned Didot, pouring a glass of absinth. "One's wife is sometimes in one's way. There now is only one at home. I left the governor there. You reached home safely after last night, eh?"

"Why not? I was in bed at three and slept soundly."

"The sky seems blue, then," said Didot pointedly.

"Ah!" Frochard exclaimed. "You have been to the drum?"

"The drum?"

"A drum is empty, eh?" grinned Frochard.

"Ah, to be sure," Didot smiled.

"He means that empty office," thought Patsy, with ears strained to catch every word. "These are two clever rogues, for fair."

"Yes, I have been there," Didot added. "The sleeping potion has disappeared."

"Not stolen!" Frochard looked alarmed.

"Hey, no! It burned out, Frochard, but failed to do the work. I cannot comprehend. It is one grand mystery. The governor never failed before. He, perhaps, can explain."

"You saw no one?"

"No."

"Everything was as we left it?"

"The same."

"That is strange, indeed," said Frochard. "Like you, Didot, I do not comprehend."

"The governor may be able to explain," Didot repeated. "He sent me this morning to see if the coast was clear, and to learn how things stood. I have done so. Finish your drink, Frochard. We will go to him and report."

"We shall find him——"

"In my home. Come."

They left the wine shop together.

Patsy glided out after them and rejoined Chick on a near corner, telling him what he had heard. In the meantime, they continued to shadow their quarry.

Ten minutes later the two crooks met Lucien Legarde—scarce five minutes after his hurried departure from the house of Didot. He was on his way to have joined them in the wine shop.

Chick and Patsy watched them from a convenient concealment.

The three men talked earnestly for several moments, Legarde with countenance clouding, and then they walked quickly away in the direction of Didot's dwelling.

Nick Carter was then stealing into the house, on his way to the back chamber.

Suddenly, when very near the front door of the house, Legarde halted and grasped an arm of each of his companions. Then, with a scowl as black as midnight, he pointed through the narrow yard at one side of the house.

Across the rear garden and that beyond it, he had caught sight of—a spot of bright light on the darker wall of the Poisson residence.

For about two minutes the three men remained on the sidewalk in whispered discussion.

Legarde did most of the talking, evidently giving his companions some hurried instructions.

Didot shifted a weapon to his side pocket.

Then the three men crept up the front steps and noiselessly entered the house.

Nick Carter still was in the back chamber.

Under a hedge fronting an estate some thirty yards from the Didot dwelling, Chick and Patsy had seen what occurred.

"Gee! that looks like something doing," was Patsy's comment, after the three crooks had entered the house.

"Something doing, Patsy, is right," Chick replied. "We'd better have a nearer look."

"That's right, too."

"Those lilacs in the side yard would shelter us."

"Say the word, then, and it's the lilacs for mine."

"Consider it said," Chick muttered.

"I'm with you," said Patsy. "Come on."

CHAPTER X.

MAN TO MAN.

If Nick Carter, when caught as described, felt any dismay over the sudden threatening turn of affairs, he did not betray it. He gazed at Legarde, in whose eyes there was a deadly gleam not wisely ignored, and replied without moving:

"I shall not stir, Legarde, while those two rascals have their guns trained on me."

"Pardieu! that is a wise decision," sneered Legarde. "Permit me to introduce them. In the language of the squared circle—Monsieur Gaston Didot in this corner. Monsieur Louis Frochard, in this corner."

"Delighted, gentlemen, I'm sure," said Nick dryly.

"Yes, yes, and we—but we will keep you covered, Monsieur Carter, all the same," cried Didot, with an icy laugh.

"I would advise it, Didot, by all means," Nick retorted.

"We shall do so. The advice is wasted."

Lucille's eyelids were fluttering.

Legarde saw, and he made a swift pass in her direction.

The girl collapsed and slid to the floor, then every nerve and muscle appeared to turn rigid. Legarde had thrown her into a state of complete catalepsy.

"The significance of such a scene if she were to slip from under my control, might be detrimental to her health," he remarked ironically, glancing quickly at Nick.

"Or yours!" said Nick pointedly.

"I will attend to her later and send her home—after attending to you!" Legarde added ominously.

Then, drawing his revolver, he stood directly in front of Nick and commanded:

"Now, then, your hands behind you. The chain, Frochard! I will keep him covered. Be sure that you make him fast. *Sapristi!* he is most slippery."

Nick offered no resistance, made no comment. With half an eye he could see that he was confronted by men who would not shrink for the fraction of a second from killing him. He put his hands behind him.

Frochard drew a chain from his pocket. On one end of it was a double ring; on the other, a hook. He stepped back of Nick and slipped the rings over the detective's hands. Then he twisted the chain in and out around Nick's arms, in some peculiar way of his own, and secured it with the hook through one of the links.

It was a curious contrivance, the like of which Nick never had seen. He found that every effort to loosen the chain resulted only in drawing it tighter. It was like a "choke pear" in one's mouth.

Legarde returned his revolver to his pocket.

"Now, Monsieur Carter, sit down," he said curtly.

"Thanks," Nick replied, obeying.

"We now can discuss our accounts complacently and may strike a balance. We shall, at least, wind them up permanently."

"Possibly," Nick admitted.

"The situation admits of no other possibility," sneered Legarde.

"Very well. I will take your word for it."

"You once threatened to get me, Monsieur Carter. Instead, as I then could also have predicted—I have got you."

"That appears undeniable," Nick coolly allowed. "I am not foolish enough, Legarde, to disagree with you on that point."

"Pardieu!" Legarde exclaimed. "I can at least admire your nerve. You are a foe worthy of my steel, Monsieur Carter—but you are much too dangerous a foe."

"Others have thought so, Legarde."

"You have a thrust with which I am not familiar," Legarde went on icily, as if there had been no interruption. "You have a way of getting under one's guard that might prove serious. *Pardieu!* life is too dear for me to take too long chances."

"I agree with you again," said Nick. "You had better dispose of me while you can."

"I shall do so."

"If nothing prevents."

"Nothing will prevent."

"Perhaps."

"France is not big enough for both of us, Monsieur Carter," Legarde coldly went on. "You impregnate the very air with an unhealthy condition. *Pardieu!* I confess that I do not feel easy when you are around."

"Few men of your vocation do," Nick pointedly answered.

Legarde laughed acidly.

Frochard and Didot grinned.

The girl on the floor remained as rigid as a corpse.

The scene was one that Nick long remembered. He wondered how soon it was to end. Of the end itself, barring interference, he could have no doubt. It was perfectly obvious that Legarde intended to murder him.

This was further confirmed by the next words of the heartless rascal. He smiled with villainous complacency and said.

"Few men of my vocation do, eh? For that reason, Monsieur Carter, we shall lose no time in getting rid of you."

"That is what I advised," said Nick indifferently.

"Have you any choice of the way and means?"

"Not the slightest, Legarde."

Legarde grinned.

"We will then make a selection for you," said he. "You have heard of our sewers. They have a world-wide reputation. They are interesting, at least, if not inviting. You shall see for yourself. You shall inspect them. You shall take up a residence in them, in fact, and——"

"On the contrary, Monsieur Legarde, I shall do nothing of the kind," interrupted Nick, without a change of voice or countenance.

Beyond the threatening figures of the three men confronting him—he had caught sight of Chick's face among

the lilac leaves. The turn of an eye signified what he wanted, and the face disappeared.

Legarde looked surprised.

"*Sapristi!*" he exclaimed. "Has the situation turned your head, Monsieur Carter?"

"Not at all," said Nick.

"But you do not mean——"

"I mean, Legarde, that instead of taking up a permanent residence in the sewer, I shall take you and these two scamps to police headquarters."

Legarde laughed loudly, while Didot and Frochard threw up their hands derisively—and Nick seized the opportunity presented.

"Do not doubt it?" he cried, and then whistled sharply.

Two figures bounded into the room through the back door.

Four revolvers covered the three astounded crooks.

The voice of Chick Carter told them what to expect.

"The first man who moves will be—a dead man!"

"That's right!" yelled Patsy, by way of emphasis. "Hands up!"

The hands of Didot and Frochard already were in the air—and they did not drop them.

Legarde shrank for an instant, turning as white as his shirt front—and then he clasped his hands back of his head, gazing at Nick, and smiled. He did not ask how the trick had been turned. He did not appear to care. He said, as calmly as if discussing the price of a cold bottle:

"Really, my dear Carter, you are a very wonderful man! *Pardieu!* I never met your equal! You have given me the greatest surprise of my life. I submit gracefully to your wishes. But permit me to add—you have accomplished nothing. You merely detain me briefly and cause me a little bother. Nothing more! Let me also make another prediction: At this hour to-morrow, Monsieur Lucien Legarde will be a free man again and at liberty to act his own will."

"I'll risk that," said Nick bluntly."

"Messieurs, we are at your service," said Legarde, with a bow.

"Fit them with some good old American bracelets, Chick," Nick directed. "We'll land them at the police headquarters within the hour."

Nick's prediction turned out to be correct.

One hour later found Lucille at home, in a normal condition, and the truth had been revealed to her forgiving father.

One hour later also saw restored to Monsieur Poisson all of his stolen property, which was found concealed in Didot's house.

One hour later, moreover, found Legarde and his two confederates seated in cells in the city prison, the first step toward righteous punishment.

Thus it was, in brief, that Nick Carter made good on foreign soil and against a foreign foe. His deductions from the beginning, as already set forth, had been absolutely correct.

THE END.

That Legarde's prediction was not a vain one, will be found by those who read "The Crook's Double; or, Nick Carter and the Fixed Alibi," which will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 74, out February 7th. This remarkable French criminal, who had baffled the cream of the detective bureau of France, Russia, and England, continues to spur on the great American detective to do his utmost, for, though no fault of Carter, the success of his first victory is largely undone.

$10,000 REWARD;

Or, Steve Manley in a New Role.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER VII.

STEVE MAKES ANOTHER MOVE.

"The girl's right!" growled Gleason decisively. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't force him to drink. Neither can we force this infernal frog-eating Frenchman to tell us where he has hidden the trunk. I've tried it, and I believe the treacherous dog would die first. We can gain our object by strategy only, and the girl's right."

The scene was the back room adjoining Jim Kennedy's dive, in Bluff Street.

Steve had no difficulty in finding the place.

It was well known to the police.

The hour was eight in the evening, just twenty-four hours after the assault upon Casson, who then was lying, secured hand and foot, with a gag in his mouth, in the cellar under Kennedy's saloon.

Steve was seated on the edge of the table, in the dismal back room, and in company with Gleason and the two ruffians who had served him as confederates.

Yet neither looked with much favor on the project Steve had suggested.

"Well, you're the boss of the job, and the one to suffer most if the girl queers it," Kennedy grimly rejoined, in response to Gleason's remarks. "She can see the man, if you say so."

"It's the surest way," said Gleason decidedly, "and the quickest."

"Where is the man?" demanded Steve.

"In the cellar."

"Isn't there a back window I can force?"

"There's only one, and a pane broken in that," growled Kennedy. "You can get it open easy enough."

"Then let me get at the man, and I'll soon see how the game looks," said Steve. "I'm dead sure I can work it."

"Go, make the attempt!" commanded Gleason. "Then come back here and tell us."

Steve needed no second bidding.

The plan he had advocated had been thoroughly discussed, and they all knew of what it consisted.

Leaving the place by a rear door, Steve soon located in the gloomy back yard, which was half filled with empty beer kegs, the cellar window to which Kennedy had referred. It was faintly illumined by a smoky lantern burning in one corner of the damp basement, and Steve knelt on the ground outside and found the broken pane.

Bending down to the aperture, he called softly:

"Hist! hist!"

Instantly a low groan answered the sound.

"Is that you, Mr. Casson?" Steve whispered sharply. "If it is you, make a noise again."

Again a groan answered his words.

"Keep still, now!" cried Steve. "I heard you, and I'll try to get in. But Gleason is in the saloon, and I'm taking long chances."

All this was horseplay on Steve's part, done to blind the Frenchman.

After a few minutes' work, Steve succeeded in swinging open the hinged window, and in reaching the cellar floor three feet below.

He found Casson secured in one corner, with irons both upon his wrists and ankles.

The Frenchman was exceedingly pale, but the spirit of his grim determination showed even through the satisfaction that lighted his eyes when he beheld Steve Manley.

He could not but wonder at the courage of a girl who thus could venture there, yet he did not for a moment suspect the truth.

"I told you I'd stick to you," whispered Steve, while he removed, with some difficulty, the gag from Casson's mouth. "Speak low, mind you, for Gleason is up in the room overhead, and if looks count for anything, the gang here are bad people."

"How did you find me?" gasped Casson, as soon as he could speak.

"Gleason was at the house again to-day, and I followed him when he left," explained Steve. "I was sure he was the one who nailed you last night."

"One!" hissed Casson bitterly. "There were three."

"I didn't see but one."

"You fainted."

"And when I came to, you were gone."

"They took me away in a carriage. They have nearly killed me."

"We'll fool 'em yet. I was afraid I couldn't find you."

"Thank God, you did! You are a brave girl, and I'll not forget it."

"D'ye want me to call the police?"

"No, no, that won't do!"

"Why not?" asked Steve innocently.

"It would expose the whole game."

"I didn't think of that."

"You must help me escape. Once free again, I'll be ready for them next time. Can't you get me a file?"

"Sure I can! And I'll bring it here the first chance I get. I'll get in with it to-night, if I can."

"The sooner the better," said Casson eagerly; "but don't let them catch you at it. That would ruin all."

"I'll look out they don't catch me," whispered Steve confidently. "If I can't get in again to-night, I'll come to-morrow."

"I'll try to be patient."

"Mr. Gleason, the master, thinks you've run away."

"For what?"

"'Cause you stole the trunk," said Steve, now laying his plan for the morrow. "It's in all the newspapers, how you were afraid of being arrested, and ran off to give the cops the slip. I knew better, but I didn't dare say so for fear I'd spoil your game."

"*Sacré!* I'm glad you didn't," muttered Casson, with a look of serious misgivings. "If it is reported that I have fled, I must get out of this place as quickly as possible."

Steve knew what this meant.

It was the very thing he had anticipated.

Casson evidently feared that his confederates, if they thought that he had fled, would be after the reward offered by William Gleason.

This was the very apprehension Steve was trying to create in the mind of the Frenchman.

"I'll go out again now, if you say so," he replied; "and see if I can buy a file for you. If I can, I'll bring it here to-night."

"*Pardieu!* make the attempt at once!" exclaimed Casson. "Delay may cost me dearly."

Yet despite his faith in Steve, he could not bring himself to disclose the location of the trunk, or to send Steve with a message to his confederates. It was that instinctive caution which one sometimes cannot resist, even when felt to be unreasonable.

"Is there anything I can do before I go?" whispered Steve, preparing to depart in search of the desired tool.

"Only fix the gag again, so they'll not suspect any one has been here," said Casson. "You needn't tie it in so tight, however, and that'll make it easier for me. And come back with the file to-night, if you can."

"I'll do my best, on the level."

"I know you will."

"And if I can't get in to-night, I'll make sure of it some time to-morrow."

"I don't fear that you'll fail me," nodded Casson, with a grateful glance. "Now, then!"

This meant for Steve to replace the gag at once, that he might aid the Frenchman to escape that very night, if possible.

It was very evident to Steve that Casson had been made exceedingly anxious by the disclosure that a report of his flight was in print, and this was precisely what Steve wanted.

It was a safe conjecture in that case, that the first move Casson would make on regaining his liberty, would be to seek his confederates, either to secure or to prevent their returning the stolen property.

It took Steve but a few minutes to replace the gag and make ready to go.

"I'll come back as soon as I get the files," he again said softly. "And if the coast is clear, I'll free you before morning."

The Frenchman gave him another grateful look, and Steve then clambered out through the window, which he secured as he had found it. Then he returned to join the knaves in the back room.

He now found Gleason alone, however.

"Well, what do you make of it?" the latter at once demanded.

"It'll be dead easy," Steve answered, confidently. "The whole plan can be worked before this time to-morrow."

"Don't he suspect anything?"

"Not the first thing. I gave him the jolly just as I told you, and now he thinks I'm going to help him escape to-night. To stave off doing that, one of the gang must go in the cellar as if to watch him, and then he'll see I couldn't do the job."

"I'll have Fenton look after that."

"And to-morrow morning I'll come here again and finish the scheme."

"You still think you can blind him?"

"Haven't I done it, so far?" demanded Steve. "I know I can do it."

"What time will you come?"

"I'll be here at nine o'clock. It'll cost me the place I've

got, but I don't mind that, for I'm feeling dead sure of the hundred."

Gleason laughed deeply, and nodded his approval.

"You shall have it the moment we have landed the trunk," he quickly answered.

"And the fare to New York!" cried Steve, for effect.

"Yes, and the fare to New York."

"That's all to-night, then, isn't it?"

"Yes," growled Gleason moodily; "that's all to-night."

Neither Kennedy nor Fenton were quite satisfied that the girl whom this man had rung into the affair was to be trusted, and when Steve left the dive a few moments later, Kennedy followed and shadowed the young detective all the way to the Gleason house in Allegheny.

But Steve was not to be caught napping in this way.

He suspected that these two ruffians might be up to this very dodge, and he went direct to Gleason's house, quite as if his conduct was all aboveboard.

It was after ten o'clock before Kennedy returned to his dive in Bluff Street, but he entered the place in a much more satisfied frame of mind.

Yet Steve Manley was at that very moment at the telephone in Gleason's house, and in communication with Chief O'Mara, the results of which will presently appear.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE.

At nine o'clock the following morning a half dozen officers in civilian dress left police headquarters and took various stations in Bluff Street, all within view of Jim Kennedy's saloon, and there awaited the movements of the young detective who so cleverly was working out the design he had invented, and who now had imparted his entire plan to Chief O'Mara.

At about the same time, Steve Manley, still in girl's attire, again forced the window at the rear of Kennedy's place, and joined Paul Casson in the gloomy cellar.

Though Steve knew he would suffer no interruption, he first of all made a bluff at fearing it.

"Don't make a noise, or speak above a whisper!" he cried softly, as he bent above the Frenchman and hastened to remove the gag from his mouth. Gleason and his two pals are now up in the saloon, and I'm taking the chance of a lifetime."

"Were you here again last night?" asked Casson, the moment he could speak.

"Of course I was! But one of the gang was here watching you, and what could I do? I was at the window till near midnight, and I've lost my place at the Gleason's for staying out late."

"Never mind your place!" cried Casson, under his breath. "I'll make that right with you, if you can get me out of here."

"I'll do that for you," whispered Steve. "And we'll have to work sharp, or your whole game will be queered."

"What do you mean?"

"One of your pals who has the trunk is trying to get the reward."

A muttered oath broke from Casson's lips, and his pallid face grew whiter than ever.

"How do you know that?" he demanded, frowning.

"I heard Mr. Gleason telling the mistress about it this morning."

"Do you know what has been done?"

"I know the master had a letter, for I saw him with it in his hands."

"Do you know what it said?"

"Only what I heard him tell the mistress," Steve hurriedly explained. "He said he'd got word from some party who knew where the trunk was, and who'd agreed to do the square thing if the money was paid and no questions asked."

"My God! is that so?" groaned Casson, writhing in bitter resentment. "I must escape! You must set me free! I must see Deverge before he ruins the whole business!"

"I've got the files!" cried Steve quickly. "It wouldn't take long."

"But the noise!"

"I've brought a cake of soap, too! That'll deaden the sound."

"You're a wonder for a girl!" cried Casson. "How did you know that?"

"I read about it in a story," Steve promptly exclaimed. "What'll you do, if I get you out of the place?"

"I'll nail that will the first thing of all," said Casson, who now was trembling with excitement. "I must check this move my friends are making. They'd ought to know I have not run away."

"It's all in the papers this morning."

"Do you know when Gleason expects to hear again?"

"Some time to-day."

"Then I must reach the house of Deverge before he leaves it!" cried Casson excitedly. "Get to work on these irons at once. There's not a moment to be lost."

"Is the place far from here?" demanded Steve, producing two files from the pocket of his dress.

"No, not far. It's over near the Ninth Street bridge," Casson hurriedly rejoined. "Get my hands free first, and then I can help you."

"Wait a bit!" cried Steve, starting up and listening. "Before we go at it, I'd better see if the gang upstairs is still in the saloon. If they should hear us, 'twould be all up for sure."

"Can you see them without being observed?"

"Yes; there's a side window in the alley. I saw 'em when I stole in that way, so I took the chance to come down here. I'll not be gone long."

Casson was now so anxious and excited that he scarce thought of making an objection, and Steve quickly left the place by the window, and disappeared from the Frenchman's view.

The move he now was about to attempt was the most hazardous of all. The very nature of it might awaken Gleason's suspicion, yet Steve felt equal to the situation.

Entering the back room, he soon caught Gleason's attention, and beckoned him there from the saloon.

"Well, what does he say?" demanded the gambler. "Will he send you to his confederates?"

Steve shook his head with evident disgust.

"I reckon the jig's up, as far as that goes," he replied quickly.

"What does he say?" growled Gleason, with an immediate frown.

"He's stiff as a ram's horn," said Steve. "He wants me to set him free, so he can see his pal and stop him from meeting Gleason."

"But why don't he send you?"

"He says he'll take no chances. He says he knows you'll

have to let him go sooner or later, and that his pal will use him on the square, even if he gets the money. What he wants, is to get out and see him himself."

"But I'll not stand for that!" cried Gleason, with an angry growl.

"It's the only chance left!" said Steve significantly.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Oh, I'm no fool, if I have kinder failed in the job!" cried Steve, with a quick shake of his head. "I've had a talk with him, and I know the first move he'll make if he gets out of here."

"What will it be?"

"I told him his pal was coming to meet Gleason to-day, to try to get the reward, and the Frenchman's first move will be to go to the house where the trunk is and stop him."

"Are you sure of that?"

"It's what he said himself."

"In that case Fenton and I might follow him and yet get the will," grimly muttered Gleason, running squarely into the very net Steve was spreading for him.

"That was just the caper I had in mind," said Steve quickly.

"Are you sure he will go there?"

"There ain't any doubt of it."

"Do you know where the house is?"

"He says it's over near the Ninth Street bridge, and that only one of his pals is there."

"We can do up one man, right enough," growled Gleason. "If I was certain he would go——"

"Ain't it the only chance?" interrupted Steve, apparently interested only for Gleason's success. "He'll take me along with him, he says, and if you'll give me a gun I'll call him down the moment he finds the trunk. Then if you and Fenton are in the house, the trick will be turned dead easy."

"The chance is worth taking," Gleason now said bluntly, more than ever struck by the feasibility of the scheme. "But how in thunder are you going to set him free? He's in irons."

Steve was ready for him at every point.

"You'll have to give me time to do that part of the job," he promptly rejoined. "I'll have to get some files and go down there and help him cut the irons. I can give him a bluff I've bought the tools, and that'll make the game all the stronger with him."

"That's true enough," nodded Gleason.

"I can get him free in an hour, and when we leave the cellar you and Fenton could be laying for us and track us to the house."

"We'll try it," said Gleason, after some little hesitation. "The scheme is at a pass requiring some such desperate move. You get the files and do your part of the job. When you leave here with him, you will know that Fenton and I are following you."

"And when we get to the house?"

"Go in with him, and be ready to let us know in what room to find you."

"Will you enter the house?"

"Yes, if we have to batter down the door," cried Gleason vehemently. "Did you say you wanted a gun?"

"'Twouldn't do any harm to have one," said Steve innocently. "I wouldn't shoot it for the whole reward, but mebbe I could make a bluff with it, and keep the Frenchman quiet till you came."

"The very thing!" cried Gleason approvingly.

And he gave Steve the revolver which Casson had carried two nights before.

CHAPTER IX.

ROUNDED UP.

While Gleason rejoined Fenton in the saloon, Steve slipped out by the rear door and watched them through the side window. He waited only to make sure his own movements were not being noticed, and then hastened to rejoin Casson in the cellar."

"Where have you been?" the latter demanded, for the first time feeling a vague suspicion.

It was speedily dispelled, however, by Steve's explanation.

"I've been watching Gleason and one of his pals," he quickly rejoined.

"What are they doing?"

"I thought they were going out, and I waited to see. They've both left the saloon and gone up the street."

"And Kennedy?"

"He's alone, and waiting on the rounders," replied Steve, with evident satisfaction. "The coast is clear for a time, and if we move sharp we can get the best of 'em."

This information was quite enough to rouse Casson to a high pitch of nervous eagerness, and they both set vigorously to work with the files. In less than an hour the labor of removing the irons was completed, and the Frenchman, with his pale cheeks grown flushed with exultation, stood free on the floor.

"Now, then," cried Steve, "we must make the sneak out of here at once."

"You go ahead," nodded Casson; "for you know the way."

"Follow me close! When you come to the side window in the alley, stoop down below it, so's not to be seen from the saloon."

"I'll watch your own movements."

"That'll be all, and then we'll be in the street and safe to get away."

"And I'll soon have the ribbons in hand again, if that fool Deverge has not ruined all," muttered Casson, while Steve clambered out through the window.

The Frenchman quickly followed him, and in a moment both had safely reached the street.

As they moved hurriedly away, two men from an opposite doorway took up the trail and cautiously followed them.

These men were Jack Gleason and Fenton.

Before these several parties had covered a hundred yards, one by one the half dozen officers who had been patiently watching and waiting also took up the pursuit.

Yet, as far as appearances went, there was nothing of this sort in the wind.

At the end of fifteen minutes Casson and Steve approached an ordinary wooden house near the river, and the former said softly:

"Here is the place."

They had been walking rapidly, and the Frenchman was nearly out of breath.

"Is this where the trunk is?" Steve asked, with a remarkable display of innocence.

"Yes," answered Casson, glancing sharply about. "A

French family lives here, friends of mine, and the woman's husband is the man I mentioned."

"Deverge?"

"Yes, that's the name."

Having satisfied himself that he was not pursued, Casson had mounted the steps and rung the bell.

It was answered by a slender little woman in a wrapper, who started quickly on seeing Casson, and cried, with a smile:

"Oh, it's you, Paul!"

"Yes, Mrs. Deverge," bowed the valet, politely lifting his hat. "Is Jaques in the house?"

"No; he went out an hour ago."

"Do you know where?"

"He did not say."

"I suppose he still has my trunk here?"

"Oh, yes; it's up in his room."

Casson's face took on an expression of relief.

If the trunk still was there, he believed he yet was in time to avert the calamity he had feared.

"There are one or two things in it, Mrs. Deverge, which I would like to remove," he now said politely. "I suppose I may go up and get them."

"Why, of course!" exclaimed the woman, laughing. "You may go right up to the room, if you wish. You know the way."

"Certainly! thanks!" cried Casson, bowing and smiling. "Come, Rosy, you may go also. This is the lady's maid in the same family with me, Madame Deverge."

"And a pretty girl she is!" exclaimed the woman, bowing in response to the introduction.

"Yes," laughed Casson, as they entered; "and I'm not sure but I shall marry her, sooner or later."

"It'll be sooner, when the guy begins to sing his other tune," thought Steve, as the woman closed the door by which they had entered.

They scarce had disappeared into the house when Gleason and Fenton came hurrying up from a near corner, intending to effect an entrance without ringing, if possible.

At the same time two men approached from the opposite direction, and met them at the foot of the wooden steps.

"Hello, Fenton!" exclaimed one of them.

Fenton turned about as if struck.

"Good God!" he cried, turning suddenly pale. "Chief O'Mara!"

"Yes!" exclaimed the chief, sharply regarding him. "What little game are you and Jack Gleason now engaged in?"

"No game at all!"

"Well, well, we shall see," laughed Chief O'Mara, quickly making a sign for two other men to then join the group.

"Garrity," he added, "you and the sergeant hold these men in custody, while the rest of us see what's going on in this house."

"You don't mean that I am under arrest!" cried Gleason, upon whose mind there now was dawning a bitter appreciation of the scheme by which he had been duped.

"I don't mean anything else," said Chief O'Mara curtly.

"And that girl?"

"That girl, Mr. Jack Gleason, was one of my clever young officers. How about that door, Morrissey?"

"It is locked, sir."

"We'll try the back way, then."

Leaving Jack Gleason overcome with dismay that could find no expression in words, the chief quickly led two of the officers into the narrow yard adjoining the dwelling.

While this episode occurred on the street Paul Casson had hastened to one of the attic chambers, closely followed by Steve.

The moment the Frenchman entered the room a cry of satisfaction broke from his lips.

His eyes had fallen upon William Gleason's trunk, still locked and strapped as when delivered to Foley, the expressman.

"*Pardieu!* it is here!" he exclaimed joyously. "And I don't think it has been opened."

"Have you got a key?" demanded Steve.

"Here in my pocket. It's the one belonging to Mr. Gleason."

"Open her up!" cried Steve, "and we'll see if the will is here."

Casson hurriedly unstrapped the trunk and dropped to his knees before it.

His every movement was imbued with intense eagerness and excitement, and Steve stood by and watched him with interesting interest.

In a moment Casson threw up the cover, and his gaze fell on the neatly folded garments within.

"It has not been touched!" he cried excitedly. "The will must be where I left it."

"Look and see," said Steve, feeling for the revolver Gleason had given him.

With haste and eagerness he did not attempt to suppress, the Frenchman began unpacking the trunk. Before the work was finished his impatience got the best of him, and he tossed the lower garments out haphazard over the floor.

The moment the trunk was empty he touched a spring which threw open a panel in the bottom, disclosing a small secret compartment.

And the first thing to meet his excited gaze was the will of Peter Gleason, found precisely where his own hand had placed it.

"*Pardieu*, it is here!" he cried joyously, reaching to get it. "Our fear has been groundless."

"The will?"

"Yes, the will!"

"Give it to me, Mr. Casson!"

The startling change in Steve's voice caused the Frenchman to look up suddenly, with the coveted document still clasped in his hand.

Steve was standing back of the trunk, and Paul Casson's lifted eyes met the threatening gleam of his own revolver, pointed straight at his head.

"Don't move!" cried Steve sternly. "Give me the will, and stay where you are! If you don't, I'll have to put you in shape for a ride in the front carriage."

The last vestige of color had gone from Casson's cheeks, and his thin, gray lips began twitching violently.

"What do you mean?" he gasped faintly.

"Gimme the will!"

"Yes, yes; but——"

"There ain't any buts about it!" cried Steve, as he seized the document from the Frenchman's hand, still covering him with his own weapon. "You've played your game, Mr. Casson, and lost!"

"My God! you've deceived me!" shrieked Casson, with a sudden realization of the truth. "You're not a girl!"

"Well, hardly!" cried Steve. "I only made a mistake

this morning and got on me sister's clothes. D'ye think, if I was a girl, I'd have taken chances with such a crook as you?

"Hark! D'ye hear the steps on the stairs? That's Chief O'Mara and the detectives, coming to give us a call. I thought the party wouldn't be complete without 'em. Don't move! If you do, I'll—— Ah, Chief O'Mara! Here is the man, and here is the will!"

And, on seeing the chief stride into the room, Steve quickly lowered his weapon and placed the document in Chief O'Mara's extended hand.

The rest may be briefly told.

Before noon that day every person who had had a hand in the robbery was lodged in jail, and the stolen property returned to its owner.

The satisfaction of William Gleason may easily be imagined, and his gratitude found better expression than in words alone.

In addition to the mantle of fame that had fallen on young Steve Manley came also the joy of a far greater wealth than he had ever known.

For before the sun had set on that day of his youthful triumph Steve received from the grateful broker the recompense he so well had earned—the ten thousand dollars reward!

With this princely sum in his possession—for to Steve it was indeed princely—the clever young detective started in to prepare himself more thoroughly for his chosen profession. He wanted to learn perfectly telegraphy and shorthand, and to get at least a smattering of some of the different languages, so that he could understand conversations and remarks he might hear in a foreign tongue.

Here, then, we will take leave, for the present, of this daring young inspector, who had already won the respect and admiration of Chief O'Mara, and who was heartily liked by every inspector in the famous chief's office.

He did not entirely give up his detective work, but continued to put his newly acquired knowledge to the test at every opportunity.

Chief O'Mara confidently predicts that young Steve Manley will be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, detectives this country has ever known.

THE END.

THE MONEYED LETTER.

By JAMES L. BOWEN.

It was a good many years ago that I was on a journey through some portions of the West, and stopped for the night at a rude inn, away in the depths of the forest, whose chief recommendation was the frank, genuine hospitality which was accorded to all whom fortune threw in the way of the enterprising landlord. It was about dark, before the full shades had spread themselves over the earth, that a single horse stopped before the door, and an old man alighted. I should have pronounced him seventy years of age, tall and strongly made, with scarce a disposition to stoop in his frame. When a boy had taken charge of his animal, the old man drew a large mail bag from the front of the saddle, and disappeared with it in the gloom.

"Who is he?" I ventured to ask the host, who just then passed my chair.

"The old man with the mail?" Mine host was a Yankee, like myself. "It is old Jonathan Hockie—has carried the mail between here and B—— these ever so many years.

"Does he stop here?"

"Oh, yes; he will be over when he has taken the mail to the post office. He always brings my letters."

I was glad of this, for I had taken a sudden strange interest in the old man.

So when he had returned to the inn, lighted a pipe, and took his seat upon the rude piazza, I drew a cigar from my case and followed his lead.

"Good evening, sir," I said, throwing myself upon a seat beside him.

He took a quiet but earnest survey of me from his large, truthful eyes, and returned my salutation with courtesy.

We conversed for some time upon such topics as seemed to interest the old man much, till it was so late that I felt my curiosity to hear him relate one of his adventures must give way for the night at least.

"Do you leave at an early hour in the morning?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied; "my ride is so long that it behooves me to be upon the way as soon as practicable. I dislike riding in the dark, especially since I am getting so old. I shall be seventy-three in a few weeks—an old man. Besides, I once had a taste of adventure which cured me pretty effectually of any desire to travel in the dark."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, gratified beyond measure. "Were it not too late I should be more than pleased to hear it.

"It is getting a little late," he replied; "but you have been entertaining me all the evening, and it shall not be said that I refused to tell you a single little story. So if you are inclined to hear I will spin, as the sailors have it.

"As I told you, I was born down in good old Puritan New England, and lived there till I was some twenty years of age. My name, I might say, is Jonathan Hockie. At the age of twenty I had saved money enough to bring me pretty far West, as West was then.

"I have seen Indian wars and many tumults of other descriptions, but I have always kept from them, if possible, for I am a peaceable man by nature. For forty years I have carried mails from one point to another upon the frontier, chiefly as you saw me arrive to-night—on horseback. I have met Indians, and I have encountered worse desperadoes of my own color on the outside. But, as I was saying, I had an adventure in the end that put me on my guard.

"It was twelve or thirteen years ago that I was running this same route that I carry now. It is a good fifty miles from here to the other end of the route, and with the roads, or paths, it makes me a good day's ride, even in summer. In the winter I have to make two stays of it.

"The village of A—— was quite a place for those times—half a dozen houses scattered along, perhaps. The rest were just settlements, where they got about one letter in a month, and a paper half as often. At both ends of the route was a little village, and when I say that these places contained every house upon the route, you can guess something how lonely it must have been.

"There was a man in B——, the other extremity of my route, who expected a sum of money by mail, and he made a deal more noise than I should about it. One day he had a letter, stating that it would be sent just a week from date. But the week went by, and no money.

"'Now, I shall expect you to bring me that hundred

dollars to-morrow night,' he says to me one morning, as I was starting for this place.

"There was generally a crowd around when I went, and on this especial occasion there were several whose looks I didn't like, though I wasn't really afraid for myself. I thought Augustus Britchard had better keep still about his money, for his own sake. I gave him a wink, but he wouldn't heed it, and kept telling how sure he was that it would be along in the next mail.

"I made my journey over, and started back next morning. I went on till noon, and then stopped at A——, where the mail was changed while I ate dinner and fed my horse.

"After dinner I took a smoke, for my pipe was always my best friend, and after that was smoked out I went down to the barn, where I had left my horse. But no horse was there. I looked in every improbable place, to see that somebody hadn't changed him, and then I asked the innkeeper. He knew nothing about it, and it required quite an effort to convince him that I was not joking.

"Pretty soon we had raised a general alarm, and all the men turned out to help look for him. But it didn't amount to anything. We spent more than two hours looking for him, and finally some women espied him coming back the same way we had come that morning. But that was all. We did not find any explanation of the affair then, though I found one afterward.

"I packed off at once, and rode as fast as I could to make up lost time. But I had lost too much, and the roads were too rough for me to make up. It was ten or eleven miles to C——, the only settlement between A—— and B——. It was after five o'clock when I reached it, and toward six when I was ready to start again. I had yet fifteen miles to go—most of the way through woods—and but for the fact that I was well acquainted with the route it would have been a difficult one to follow.

"I resolved to make the best of what daylight remained, and so I put Charley—my horse—to the best of his speed, and we went on an easy trot, where the ground would allow, for about two miles. It was getting a little dusk, and I was thinking whether Augustus Britchard would be at the post office when I should arrive with my mail, when my horse gave a little jump and I looked up and saw three men coming down a sort of glade, where few trees grew, and they were close to me already. They were all mounted, though I did not recognize any of them.

"'Are you going to B——?' says one of them, holding up his finger. I remember just the motion to this day.

"'That is my destination,' said I, keeping a sharp lookout for their movements.

"'Then, if you don't object,' he continued, 'we will ride along with you. We have been off and on the road till we had just made up our minds to camp for the night. It is a mighty blind road, stranger.'

"'It is,' I returned, 'and you are welcome to ride with me if you see fit. But I advise you to hasten, for it is a still more disagreeable road after dark.'

"'That is a fact,' the fellow continued, 'especially when a chap has letters in the mail with money in 'em.'

"'What do you mean by that?' I demanded, looking at him carelessly, but pretty sharply, I suspect.

"'Oh, nothing,' he returned, very coolly, 'only I was out to B—— when Britchard was so anxious for you to bring his money to-night—let's see—'twas yesterday morning.'

"He spoke so cool about it, and gave a faint laugh, that I thought possibly he might be an honest fellow, though I couldn't help thinking that if they were inclined to be rascals I should stand but a poor chance with the three of them. I had only a pair of pistols, which I had carried so long that I could not have sworn as to their condition, and a sharp clasp knife that I carried as a tool rather than weapon. These men, as I saw at a glance, had rifles, and it was more than likely that they were armed in other respects, though these alone were sufficient to give them an advantage over me.

"I could not well watch them, for they fell behind and began to jabber with each other. So I put Charley to his steps about as lively as he could go, and they had to use themselves to keep up with him. So things went on, and it grew darker all the while.

"A little ways from where I had encountered them we came to a sort of prairie, or desert, I should call it, where nothing but a stunted crop of grass ever grew. This was several miles across, and by the time we were halfway it became as dark as it would be during the night.

"I kept a hand on my pistol now, for if there was to be any foul play I expected it would come soon. My worst fears were confirmed in every respect, except, perhaps, in the result. We had almost reached the edge of the forest, and I had gently drawn one of my pistols, and held it cocked in readiness for any emergency. I had heard my companions, if I may use the name, whispering behind me, and my fears were getting to be pretty well excited.

"Just as we were entering the shadows, one of the horsemen spurred up, and was beside me before I had really any suspicion of his movements. If he had struck the moment he came near enough, it would have been all in his hands. I was at his mercy. But as he was trying to urge his horse alongside mine, close enough to exactly suit his purpose, a fallen log caused his horse to deviate a trifle, and I saw a long knife in his right hand. Then I knew his purpose.

"Quick as thought I turned in my saddle, and presented the pistol full at his head. He saw the movement, and pulled up his animal with a jerk. My brain was in a great whirl, and I hardly knew what I was going to do. At least I had no purpose in view. I only realized that those three men meant to kill me, away there in the gloomy forest, and I started up my old horse upon the impulse of the moment.

"No sooner had I started than I heard the snap of a rifle just behind me, and one of the gang sang out: 'Shoot the cuss! My gun won't go off!' Of course, by the time they were ready to shoot again, I had gained upon them considerably. They had rather stopped to see the fun go on, and, sure enough, it was going on at a pretty good rate. I bent low, and when the ball came—for it did come in good earnest—it passed just over my head.

"By this time I had something of a plan in my mind, for it was getting evident to me that I could never get away from them by the speed of my horse. I seized my mail bag, and rolled to the ground—how I never knew. My horse was a little frightened, and I liked that all the better. I let him go, and got out of the way with my mail as soon as possible. It was so dark then that I had no trouble in hiding, and soon I heard them pass me by, looking upon the ground as they went, for the villains fancied that they had heard me drop.

"Then I began to think what I should do. It was fully eight miles, as I calculated, to B——, and most of the way through woods. If I could get through I should be safe. To turn back would be more dangerous, for I could not cross the plain behind me without being seen, if any one was looking for me. Perhaps I could dodge them through the woods to B——. I would try it.

"I had scarcely made the attempt when the fellows came upon Charley. It seemed he had stopped soon after I left his back. In a moment they were divided, and were scouring the woods for me. I cannot tell what my thoughts were at that moment. The idea of being murdered in a forest at night, or of killing human beings in self-defense, was far from pleasant. I had no time for thoughts; I had to act just then.

"One of them had taken the road, or path, and one of the others came upon each side of it. The one upon the side where I was was coming directly toward me. I moved away very cautiously, for I had no idea of forming his acquaintance. But fate was against me. I held on securely to my bag, which was over my left arm, and carried my pistol in the right hand. By some unlucky chance I ran afoul of a bush, which stopped my progress, and created such a commotion that the fellow heard me.

"'This way!' he sang out, and came along, with his rifle ready for instant use. I knew there was no escape, for he would fire at any movement on my part, and he was so near me I preferred not to run the risk of his bullet. So crouching behind the shrub I waited for him to come up. I held my pistol at full cock, and I had no intention of sparing the rascal's life.

"'The old cuss is crawlin' somewhar here,' he sang out; 'I'll fix him.'

"My mind was made up then more than ever. He would shoot an old man for the sake of a hundred dollars, to be divided between the three of them. But there are many men just as low as that, and even lower. He came right along, though it seemed an age to me, and when he went over the bush I fired, for I dared wait no longer.

"Fortunately my aim was good, and he fell where he stood. I could hear the rest of them coming, and taking my precious charge upon my arm again, I started on a run through the woods. I knew they would have to stop a minute and see what was the matter, and I hoped to get out of their hearing.

"I was more successful than I could have hoped for. I got some distance, and then I waited to listen. I could hear a confused searching, and knew that they were looking for me in the vicinity. I could walk quite comfortably now, without danger of disturbing them, and a new idea entered my head.

"If I could get to my horse and mount him, perhaps I could ride away. It would be preferable to walking all the distance through the forest.

"I worked off in that direction, and soon reached my horse. Theirs were standing close by, where they had left them, to join in a closer search than they could conduct upon horseback. I led my animal some distance, to make sure that they would not suspicion my movements, and then I mounted. As I said, my constant travel of the road for nearly a year had made me pretty familiar with it, especially in this section, and I put the old horse through to the best of his ability. I expected pursuit, but strangely enough it did not come. About ten o'clock I reached B——, and at once communicated what had happened. There was excitement there, I tell you. I do not think a person in the whole place slept a wink that night. But it was all quiet, and in the morning it was whispered about who the rascals were. They were newcomers, who had been stopping there for several days, but had left the morning previous with the professed intention of going back to St. Louis. It seemed they had overheard the remark of Augustus, concerning his money, and had resolved to appropriate it to their own use.

"A squad set out with me the next morning, and went to the scene of the fracas. There was a spot of blood upon the leaves where I had shot him, but no sign of either living or dead. Some weeks afterward the smell from a hollow log attracted the attention of some hunters, and there they found the body, stowed away. The rascals never were heard of afterward. Word was sent to St. Louis, but nothing ever after transpired. I took the precaution to go well armed, for I knew not but they might wish to repeat the experiment. But I saw nothing of them, or of any similar adventure since."

"But the letter in question?" I asked. "Did it come to hand safely?"

"Quite so, when it came. But it was not till nearly a week after that it arrived. So the villains had all their trouble to no purpose, even if they had secured the bag."

I bade the old man a hearty good evening, and both retired feeling a pleasure at the meeting. In the morning, before I had risen, I saw him ready to depart. I hastened down as soon as possible, but he had gone. I almost felt as if a friend of years had left me.

HONESTY IN FINLAND.

The Finns place their money and valuables in holes in the ground and cover them with a big leaf. Such treasure is sacredly respected by all who pass it, but, in the rare event of a man wishing to borrow of his neighbor during his absence, he will take only the smallest sum he requires, and place a message in the hole telling of his urgent need, promising to repay the amount on a specified date. And he will invariably keep his word, for the Finn is invincible in his independence.

SWISS MADE FIRST HATS.

Hats were first made by a Swiss at Paris in 1404. When Charles VII. of France entered Rouen in triumph in 1449, he wore a hat lined with red velvet, bearing a rich plume of feathers. Henceforth, hats and caps, at least in France, began to take the place of chaperons and hoods.

Hats were first manufactured in England by Spaniards in 1510. Very high-crowned hats were worn by Queen Elizabeth's courtiers and were again introduced in 1783.

SWEDISH SUPERSTITIONS.

In Sweden the bridegroom has a great fear of trolls and sprites, and as an antidote against their power he sews into his clothes various strong-smelling herbs, such as garlic and rosemary. It is customary to fill the bride's pocket with bread, which she gives to the poor she meets on the way to the church, and so averts misfortune with the alms she bestows. On their return from church the bride and bridegroom visit their cow houses and farms, that the cattle may thrive and multiply.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Rare New Diamond.

The Dark Continent has given a new precious stone of inestimable value to the world. It belongs to an unknown species of diamonds, and is distinguished by an indescribably beautiful color of golden yellow.

Only a few years ago a diamond as large as a good-sized goose egg and weighing nearly 3,000 karats, was discovered in Cape Colony. The stone was cut into several huge diamonds and presented to King Edward VII. The largest one, under the name of the Culiman, forms the most-prized treasure of the English crown jewels.

The newest find is called the Heliodor—which means present of the sun—and comes from the desert in southwestern Africa. Like in most of the other cases, it is only by chance that this giant of crystals was discovered.

The late Rudolf von Beningsen, director of the German Colonial Society for Southwestern Africa, found a large crystal when he made a tour of the country in 1910. The crystal was polished by the sand of the desert, and its grayish green surface color didn't indicate its enormous value.

Von Beningsen gave the stone to his friend, Professor Lucas von Granach, who had it polished in the German diamond factory at Kreuznach. The surprising result was a clear aquamarine—crystal—of liquid gold.

The German Colonial Society had its field searched for other stones of the same species, but few crystals of green-yellow were found, and these were of tiny size.

The beautiful golden yellow of the "Heliodor" must be attributed to its richness in oxygen of iron and reminds one, as Emperor William remarks, of the clear yellow of old wine of the Moselle.

The "Heliodor" came into the possession of the kaiser, who presented it, with several others like it, in the form of a cross, as an Easter gift to the kaiserin.

The most surprising property of the "Heliodor" is its changing of color. In artificial light the jewel will shine in a greenish hue, while under the influence of the sun rays it sparkles in a golden yellow. It is a genuine diamond, and undoubtedly will soon be worn by the smart set.

1,708 Yale Students in Athletics.

Participation in athletic activities at Yale is not confined to the comparatively few men who make the various teams, according to figures made public at the university recently. These show that during the fall months 1,708 students, or a little more than half of the total registration of 3,263, took part in some form of athletic diversion.

Radium as Motor Power.

Radium was referred to as a possible means of running ships and motor cars by Doctor C. E. S. Phillips, a physicist, in an address at the Cancer Hospital, London, recently.

If it was a fact, he said, that the coal supply might give out in 200 years, scientists must look about for some new source of energy and perhaps radium would supply it. There might be enough energy in an iron stand on the table to run a steamship across the Atlantic if they could only get it out.

Although Doctor Phillips explained that he wasn't saying this with any seriousness, he carried out an experiment which indicated that there was some foundation for the remark. Using a solution of radium to decompose water, giving off an explosive mixture, Doctor Phillips then with an electric spark was able to create a current of air which drove a small fan.

Jaws Lock When He Yawns.

Walter Gray, 35 years old, farmer, presents a baffling case to Batavia, N. Y., physicians. He has yawned three times in a week and each time a physician has been obliged to administer treatment to get the man's mouth closed again, his jaws having become dislocated in each case. Physicians are at a loss to account for the trouble.

History of World in His Brain.

Felix Berol, of New York, has the comprehensive history of the world pigeonholed in a wonderfully systematized series of brain cells. Whatever he has found worth while reading he has considered of sufficient importance to remember. Whatever he hears or sees he slips into his mind for future reference.

He is a walking encyclopedia with three hundred thousand facts at his instant command, and every day adds to the accumulation of that remarkable storehouse of information. For Berol is not one of the freak-memory men who have startled the crowds time and time again. He not only remembers, but he understands, has an intellectual appreciation of the knowledge he gains.

When Berol, some time ago, came to the conclusion he was the possessor of a secret that would be of universal benefit if known, he suggested such a course of teaching to E. L. Wertheim, educational director of the Y. M. C. A. As Berol was speaking of some of his experiences, the interviewer was preparing to ask a few questions. There wasn't any logical association of ideas in the one he did put when he asked for the date of the death of that consummate villain, boaster, and artist, Benvenuto Cellini.

Berol smiled. "February thirteen, fifteen seventy-two," said he, "but I am not as big a liar as he was." And then he went on to discuss Cellini. No, he had not read his autobiography.

It was impossible for him to read everything that ever was written, but he always had attempted to learn the essentials of any event or theory, and so make his mind one of fundamental rather than surface and insignificant facts.

"When did the Huguenot massacre take place?"

"August twenty-four, fifteen seventy-two," he answered immediately.

"What is the population of the Philippines?"

"According to the last census reports it is seven million six hundred and thirty-five thousand, four hundred twenty-six, and it comprises twenty-two thousand square miles."

Then the interviewer took a pack of cards and read them aloud, one after another. When he had concluded, Berol

not only repeated them in their proper order, but was able to mention what the tenth card was, the twenty-first, or any one.

According to Berol, his whole system is one of association. It has to do with hooks and slips. Every single fact to be acquired is written down on a slip of paper, on the other side of which is the hook or suggestive idea. The student, by repeated reference to these slips, soon learns the hook, and thereby, of course, immediately recalls the associated facts.

"Whenever I read a fact in the paper, that fact is interesting because I have given a moment's attention to it. I jot down the associated fact and the hook, and in my spare moments, while I'm shaving or doing something else, I look over the slips. Every night I review in my mind whom I have seen during the day, and what I have read. It has become second nature for me to observe, and my mind is so trained that I make my association practically automatically and instantaneously.

"Here is an example: When President Wilson's cabinet appointments were announced I wanted to know them immediately; not as most people do a year from then, or never. So I put the ten names in front of me. For instance, there was Secretary of the Teasury W. G. McAdoo, of New York. Here is the process my mind went through: "Treasury? That calls up 'money.' What good is money? Why, you can 'make an' do' anything with money; 'make an' do' is McAdoo. Make an' do with what? 'With gold' you can make an' do ('W. G.') and where can you make an' do most with gold? Why, in New York, of course.

"Now, perhaps that sounds very cumbersome to you, but if you try to remember that way you will, and after you have developed your memory sufficiently those associations will be mechanical, and almost instantly leave an indelible impress on your brain.

"It is so easy to be exact, and so few people are. It really doesn't affect my happiness to know that Lima, Ohio, has a population of thirty thousand five hundred and eight, but I want to show that people can remember anything they want to. If I were a minister I would know every verse in the Bible; if I were an insurance man I would know every premium. There are all sorts of spare time to learn. Why take chances? Assurance is half the battle. If you know that you know, you are efficient, and a happy man. If you aren't sure you are inefficient and miserable."

Huge Elephant Unearthed.

An elephant with tusks fifteen feet long and bones many times larger than those of the largest living species is being unearthed in the great tar field at La Brea, Colo.

L. E. Wyman, who has charge of the paleontological investigations and excavations about the famous fossil beds, first discovered the skull bones in one of the pits. The skull, which is well preserved, was placed in the county museum at Exposition Park.

Rapid Calculator is Dead.

Reuben Field, whose phenomenal powers as a rapid calculator puzzled expert mathematicians, is dead of apoplexy at the Jackson County farm, Kansas City, Mo., where he had been cared for since 1907. He was 70 years old.

Apparently without ambition, always dependent upon others, and unable to read or write, he regarded his mathematical powers as a gift of God that would be taken from him if he turned to worldly gain. He could instantly tell, for instance, how many revolutions a car wheel would make in any distance given, or the exact time of any hour without reference to a clock, sun or other outside agency. No explanation could ever be drawn from him as to how he worked his problems.

Steals a Royal Shirt.

Karl Engelhardt, a plumber, was fined 50 marks—$12.50—in Berlin, recently, for stealing a shirt belonging to Prince Sigismund of Hohenzollern, a second cousin of the kaiser.

The prince changed his shirt after dinner in Berlin and sent it to his house by a servant. The servant was robbed on a suburban train.

The shirt has been recovered.

Mails to Carry Country's Eggs.

To get the egg from the farmer or the poultryman to the consumer without the employment of the middleman is the problem that the Division of Animal Husbandry of the Bureau of Animal Industry has sought to solve. It has suggested: "Cut out the middleman and bring the producer and the consumer together through the parcel post." But Doctor A. D. Melvin, chief of the bureau, says that this is easier said than done. The softness of the eggshell is the great obstacle in the way. No container that exactly fills the bill has been found. If the container is secure it weighs too much; if light enough it is not secure.

Doctor Melvin and associates have been experimenting for months to find the proper container for mailing eggs.

A hen that lays every day in the year would be worth her weight in gold. There were laid in the United States last year 1,700,000,000 dozen eggs, worth $350,000,000. The price of eggs has gradually increased for twenty years. In 1900, 2,799,737 cases of eggs were received in New York; last year the number increased to 4,723,558. In 1891 Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, New York, St. Louis, and San Francisco received 5,040,888 cases of eggs, and last year 13,696,401.

Within the last ten or fifteen years there has been a decided improvement of the quality of eggs and in the methods of handling them. The old custom of selling eggs by the dozen has been discarded, and now the producer disposes of his eggs by the pound. This has improved the character of the egg.

"The quickest way to arouse a desire in the producer to raise better chickens and supply better eggs is to show him that good quality poultry and eggs are worth more than those of poor quality," said H. C. Pierce, of the food research laboratory of the bureau of chemistry.

In the Southern States this has been done. At one time the North Carolina egg was considered the poorest on the market; the meat was lean. When the producers found that fat eggs weighed more than poor ones, they began to take better care of their hens and get better eggs. Soon North Carolina eggs ranked with Tennessee and Kentucky eggs.

Chemist Pierce says that $45,000,000 worth of eggs are lost annually in this country between the producer and the consumer.

"In marketing eggs there is an enormous loss," said Pierce. "Much of this is preventable. While this loss falls upon all who handle eggs, it is borne chiefly by the

producer and the consumer. The producers' loss, caused by a decrease in price, under present conditions represents that due to spoilage or poor quality. The consumers' loss is due to a curtailed supply because of the eggs that are either of poor quality or a total loss. Hence the consumer has to pay higher prices for those that finally reach him.

"While these losses are increased at all stages of handling by the producer, the country storekeeper, the produce dealer, the railroad, the commission man and jobber, and the retailer, the greatest preventable loss occurs before the produce dealer obtains the goods—that is, while the eggs are still on the farm or in the hands of the small country storekeeper who takes eggs in exchange for supplies."

By use of the parcel post, when a desirable container is obtained, the producer can do away with the middleman and put his eggs in the home of the consumer within a short time after they are laid.

"From the nest to the pantry of the consumer" is the slogan of Secretary of Agriculture Houston's egg experts.

Ten Days in a Snow Hut.

After spending ten days in a snow dugout twenty miles in the mountains from Alhambra Springs, Mont., Mike Murray, a prospector, 70 years old, was found by a searching party almost dead from exposure, hunger, and cold. Murray was forced by his extreme hunger to kill a colt which had followed his mare from the ranch and eat the raw flesh to keep himself alive.

The searching party was formed when friends became alarmed by Murray's long absence on a hunting trip. The old man had encountered a terrific snowstorm.

Fourteen Football Players Killed.

Fourteen players were killed and 175 were injured in football games in the last season.

The football casualty list for 1913 materially exceeds that of 1912 and almost equals that of 1911. In 1911 seven players lost their lives.

Carefully kept statistics show a total of ten fatalities for last year, but three of them were carried over from the previous year, death having ensued after the publication of the 1911 list. These, with the fourteen fatalities in the 1911 list, make a true total of seventeen for that year. The season of 1912 saw twenty-six injured on the gridiron, and in 1911 sixty-seven were hurt.

In all, fifteen football players have died this year, and three of these succumbed in the Twin Cities. Allen Weidman and Paul Rihelhaffer, Minneapolis high-school players, died from injuries, and Captain Charles Sweitzer, of the Hamline University team, died recently, following an attack of meningitis, which may have been caused by an old injury.

Only two university players were killed. Vernon Belyea, of the Norwich University, was thrown heavily in a game with Holy Cross, and died three days later. Edward Morrissey, captain of Strambrose University team, suffered a broken leg September 25, and died of blood poison.

The high-school players who lost their lives, in addition to the two Minneapolis boys, were John Lewis, of Cambridge, Ohio; Marcus Dunlap, of Vermillion, S. D., and William McCartney, of Lawrence, Mass.

The list of dead for the present year follows:

Belyea, Vernon S., at Worcester, Mass., September 26; left half back on Norwich University eleven, of Northfield, Vt.; spine fractured in game with Holy Cross, September 24; resided at Greenfield, Mass.

Dunlap, Marcellus, at Vermillion, S. D., October 21; grade-school student, injured in a game at recess, and died in a short time; jumped into pile-up and was buried under a mass of players.

Gay, George H., at Phoenixville, Pa., November 4; captain of the Union Club, of Phoenixville; neck broken in a game with the Pottstown eleven; while running with the ball he was tackled from behind and thrown heavily.

Kramer, Albert, at Momence, Ill., October 20; playing with the Grant Park team against Kankakee, October 19, while tackling a Kankakee runner he collided with another player; his skull was fractured, his neck dislocated, and two of his ribs were broken.

Lewis, John, at Cambridge, Ohio, November 1; high-school player; kicked in the head and died following day.

Luce, Wayne, at Gray, Wash., October 16; Wayne was but thirteen years of age, and played on his high-school team; during a local game he received a blow on the head and died in a few hours.

McCartney, William, at Lawrence, Mass., November 5; high-school student, thirteen years old; during a scrimmage in a game on November 1 his skull was fractured in three places.

Marx, Morty, at Cleveland, Ohio, November 19, plunged headfirst into a telephone pole, sustaining injuries from which he died after five days.

Morrissey, Edward, at Davenport, Iowa, November 11; captain of the St. Ambrose College eleven; sustained fatal injuries in the opening game of the season, September 27.

Rihelhaffer, Paul, at Minneapolis, Minn., November 21; high-school senior, eighteen years old; injured while playing on his class team against the juniors; he was hurt in a scrimmage in the third quarter, but continued playing; at the end of the game he dropped dead.

Riley, William, at Wilmington, Del., October 12; in a game between local teams at Wilmington he was heavily thrown and sustained concussion of the brain; he was eighteen years old.

Warner, Hal, at Kalamazoo, Mich., October 26; member of his class team; in a game between youngsters he fell on the ball when tackled, and the fall affected his heart.

Weidman, Allen, at Minneapolis, Minn., October 1; he was a first-year student at the Central High School, of Minneapolis; while carrying the ball down the field, September 18, he crashed into another player; with a broken back he lived nearly two weeks.

Wray, Homer H., at Gettysburg, Pa., November 21; student at Gettysburg College; he was hurt in a game with Dickinson College reserve team at Carlisle three weeks ago; one of the bones in his chest was fractured; abscesses formed on the lungs and caused death.

The list of the more seriously injured, a most formidable one, includes the following:

Johnson, University of Indiana, broken collar bone; John Breathed, University of Chicago, broken leg; Davis, University of Indiana, wrenched knee; Page, St. John's Military Academy, Delafield, Wis., broken leg; Schmidt, St. John's Military Academy, broken rib; Gruhn, University of Illinois, bruises; Patterson, University of Illinois, bruises; Leon Brigham, Iowa City High School, broken arm; Wilson, University of Indiana, broken collar bone; Toliefson, University of Minnesota, kicks; Tandberg, University of Wisconsin, kicked in head; Harold Pogue, Uni-

versity of Illinois, shoulder injured; Fournier, University of Minnesota, twisted knee; Kennedy, University of Chicago, bruised; Tiernan, Ames College, broken leg; Parsons, University of Iowa, hip injured; Carberry, University of Iowa, side hurt.

Pioneer Dies Before the Time He Had Set.

Judson Jones, a territorial pioneer of Minnesota, died at St. Peter, Minn., recently, while being taken to a hospital. His death occurred seven years short of the time he had set for it, he having maintained that he would live until 1920, and had a headstone already prepared, giving his death in that year.

He had been a soldier, teacher, preacher, and lawyer. He occupied the later years of his life rewriting the Bible phonetically, following a system of simplified spelling which he had devised.

He was born in New York in 1830, settling in Minnesota before it was admitted to the Union, and was a veteran of the Civil War.

Mordecai Brown May Manage Club.

Mordecai Brown, the three-fingered pitcher, is a candidate for the managership of the Cincinnati National League baseball club, to succeed Joe Tinker.

Tinker and Brown were stars of the Cubs, the Chicago National League club, when Frank Chance was manager. In those days the Cubs had the best team in the country, but the management did not appreciate the services of the veterans. Brown was sold, Tinker went to Cincinnati to take charge of the Reds, and Chance became manager of the New York Highlanders, in the American League. Tinker obtained the services of Brown in his efforts to build up a good team for Cincinnati. The new manager had disagreements with Garry Hermann, owner of the club, and its directors, which came to a finish when he was let out recently.

Brown pitched many a good game for Tinker last summer. He is one of the best in the business, and his friends assert he is level-headed enough to make an ideal manager.

New Figure in Baseball.

The action of the National League in electing Governor John K. Tener, of Pennsylvania, to its presidency will give that organization added prestige before the country. Baseball has become a big business, needing big men as executive officers. Tener will receive a salary of $25,000 a year.

The National League is the oldest organization in baseball. It has been strong ever since its start, but of recent years has been considerably rent by internal politics and dissensions. The fact has been recognized for some time that the affairs of the league require a strong head.

Governor Tener's career indicates the opportunities which lie before the ambitious and active here in America. A poor Irish immigrant lad, he had only a public-school education before taking a minor clerical position. Ill health compelled him to seek outdoor employment, and this was fortunate, as it led to his taking up professionally the game of baseball. He became a noted pitcher. He achieved his greatest reputation as a member of Captain A. C. Anson's famous White Stockings.

After giving up baseball, Governor Tener became a banker in Charleroi, Pa., and after a successful business career, which embraced considerable political activity, he was elected governor of Pennsylvania. He will retain the governorship until the end of his term, January 1, 1915, after which he will devote himself entirely to the duties of the presidency of the league. The caliber of the man is shown by his announcement that he will accept no salary for his baseball job until after the expiration of his term as governor.

Eats Gray Squirrel; Dies.

Another death attributed to the chestnut blight, the fifth in Conecticut this fall from that cause, occurred at Glastonbury. Everett Hale, thirty, was taken ill after eating a gray squirrel. The attending physician gave the cause of death as ptomaine poisoning, due to blighted chestnuts, which the squirrel had eaten.

Try to Find a Black Skunk.

Farmer boys about Wathena, Kan., are getting up early to look for a black skunk. Delbert Andrew, a skunk fancier, near Severance, wants one—the blacker the better.

Andrew started his skunk ranch last spring, when he caught four big black and white ones on his father's farm. There are now thirty skunklets frolicking on the meadows, or whatever it is they are kept on, but all of them have stripes of white, which depreciate the value of the skins. In order to perpetuate the black, he needs a "black sheep" in his flock.

Crop is Worth $110,000,000.

The government of Saskatchewan, Canada, announces that the grain harvest this year would be valued at $110,000,000, of which $71,000,000 is represented in wheat and $25,000,000 in oats. The total production was 243,500,000 bushels, of which 112,369,000 bushels was wheat, 110,210,000 bushels of oats, and 9,279,000 bushels of barley.

Taught Loyalty to the Flag.

Five hundred pupils in the William G. Weaver public school, at Wilkesbarre, Pa., are being taught patriotism by Principal John F. Shevlin. Morning and evening the 500 pupils, led by Professor Shevlin, hold patriotic exercises in the school yard.

In the morning, as the flag is unfurled, the pupils stand at attention, and at a signal from the principal the boys remove their hats and the children sing "The Star-spangled Banner." When school is over, the 500 pupils again march in a body to the flagpole and stand at attention. The boys once more remove their hats, and when the Stars and Stripes are being lowered the children sing "America."

First Canal Cargo.

Congressman Stephens, of Los Angeles, has evolved a plan for the first commercial cargo pass through the Panama Canal that is at once romantic and practical. He finds it probable that the first merchant vessel to traverse the canal probably will be one of the ships of the Panama steamship line, owned by the United States government. His idea is to have this vessel loaded at Atlantic ports, with a cargo for the Pacific coast and that the cargo be unloaded at all the chief ports from San Diego to Seattle.

Then, for the return trip he would have the vessel loaded with citrus fruits, raisins, and other California and Pacific coast products, to be unloaded at Atlantic coast ports. The matter has been broached to Secretary

of War Garrison, and may be worked out as the zealous California congressman plans. Mr. Stephens says of the plan: "This would give a corking illustration of the benefits that will be realized from the operation of the canal."

He Finds All Kinds of Pigs.

A drove of pigs is one of the assets at the Essex County, New Jersey, penitentiary. A "trusty" prisoner has charge of the pork reserve. Warden Hosp was looking over the pigs a few days ago and found they were quite numerous. He instructed a deputy warden to have a pig census taken.

The deputy warden passed the order along to the convict swineherd. In a short time the following report was submitted:

"WARDEN F. J. HOSP: I hereby submit to you full report of pigs:

"Eleven large hogs.

"Sixteen smaller ones.

"Two more smaller.

"Seven little more smaller.

"Eight little bits of things.

"One runt.

"Total, forty-five pigs."

Few Drunkards Cured.

Only a very small percentage of drunkards and habitual drinkers of alcoholic liquors are curable, and the results of the many institutes in Germany for the treatment of alcoholism have been disappointing, according to a report just issued.

Declaring that few of the patients treated stay cured, it noted that out of 732 treated in several institutions only 122 became sober citizens; 74 were sent to insane asylums; 301 refused absolutely to stop drinking; 16 were sent to prisons, and 91 to hospitals.

Prohibition in Iceland.

The law prohibiting the importation of intoxicating liquors into Iceland, which has been in effect since January 1, 1912, has been so strictly applied that not a drop of alcohol has been taken into the country since then, unless by smugglers, and none has been produced there.

The law permits the selling of liquors already in stock until January 1, 1915, but on that day no more sales of strong drink will be allowed.

The price of the spirits still on sale has been increased enormously, and it is not possible to obtain drinkable beer.

The total-abstinence movement has made great strides in the island, in every district of which are lodges consisting of hundreds of members. In most cases hotels do not possess licenses for the sale of alcohol, and in Reykavik, the capital, strong drink can be bought only in one hotel.

There are still many opponents of prohibition, and these work energetically against the application of the law, arguing that it means the restriction of personal liberty and that the treasury cannot dispense with the revenue on spirits.

Greeks in America.

The following interesting facts regarding Greek immigrants in America is an extract from a recent work on the subject by the Reverend Thomas Burgess:

In 1848 arrived in New York, 91,061 Irishmen, 51,973 Germans, 1 Greek. In 1891 the number of Greek immigrants first passed three figures. In 1907 there were 46,283, including Greeks from Turkish dominions. Greeks are the most widely distributed of all recent immigrants. They are in every State; hardly a large town is without two or three. The largest colonies are in California, 17,000; Florida, 4,000; Illinois, 30,000 (20,000 in Chicago); Massachusetts, 30,000 (8,000 in Lowell); Missouri, 8,000; New York, 32,000 (20,000 in the metropolis); Ohio, 10,300; Oregon, 6,000; Pennsylvania, 17,900; Texas, Utah, and Wyoming, 4,000 each; Washington, 6,000; Wisconsin, 5,500.

All the Greeks are educated; many who work in hotels are university men. Greek lawyers are beginning to get a foothold.

Life Convicts Going to School.

A correspondence-school course for ambitious convicts is to be opened by the University of Nebraska, confined to those at the State penitentiary.

Thirty men have applied to have their names enrolled as students. Four of the thirty are "lifers." Every "lifer" expects to be pardoned some time.

The course will include arithmetic, American history, grammar and literature, bookkeeping, and agriculture. Chaplain Johnson will be the principal. The warden announces that certain credits will be given to each student for work performed in the course.

Deficit in Penn Sports.

Football and basket ball were the only sports at the University of Pennsylvania to show a financial profit last season, according to the report submitted to the Athletic Association. Receipts from football were $54,092 for 1912, while the expenses were $23,742. Basket ball cost $2,937, and the receipts were $3,037. Baseball receipts were $8,092, and the expenses were $10,119. Track costs were $13,000, with receipts of $7,380. The report showed a deficit of $8,489.

The expenses included interest on bonds, office, and general expenses, as well as donations to many sports for which no admission fees are charged. The net receipts from all sources were $92,243, and the expenses $100,733.

A proposition to increase the membership dues was defeated. The graduate members of the board of directors elected were John A. Brown, '05; Howard Kennedy Hill, '99; John H. Minds, '98, and Carl S. Williams, '95.

Robber Dead Three Years, is Unburied.

Three years ago a bandit was killed on the Charles Revard ranch, near Pawhuska, Okla., by United States marshals. A train had been held up twenty miles south, and the mails were looted of considerable money. The robber had succeeded in making his escape, after exchanging several shots with the train crew. When the officers were informed of the appearance of a mysterious stranger at the ranch a search was made for him. He refused to surrender, and immediately commenced firing. One of the officers received a wound in the hand, but the bandit was killed.

The body was embalmed at a local undertaking establishment and left there for identification. None who called knew the dead man, and as no friends came to identify and dispose of the body, the undertaker was at a loss what to do with it. No means were found to pay the expense of burial, and as the embalmer was not disposed to go to

that expense, the body has remained unburied. As the quarters at the undertaking establishment are rather crowded, the undertaker decided on a novel scheme to get more room recently. The dead robber was fully clothed, taken to a corner of the building, placed in a casket in an upright position, as in life, and there left, presenting an uncanny appearance to those who call to see it.

A Human Pincushion.

Harold Rasmussen, of Ridgeway, Pa., is known as "the human pincushion." He can stick pins through any part of his body without feeling pain.

Rasmussen is unable to account for his ability to do his strange feats and doctors are puzzled. Some think it may be accounted for by the fact that he has "a wonderful nerve." Be that as it may, Rasmussen says he pays no attention to pins. He has even reclined on a bed of pins, each protruding half an inch above the board, the pins being placed a half inch apart.

Find New Indian Tribes.

Three tribes of Indians hitherto unknown have been discovered by the University of Pennsylvania's Amazon expedition. They are in regions of Brazil never before penetrated by white men, according to a letter received recently from Doctor Farabee, head of the expedition.

The letter was dated Boa Vista, Brazil, which is at the headwaters of ordinary navigation on the Uraracuera River, a northern affluent of the Amazon. The Indians call themselves Porocotos, Ajamaras, and Zapacas. Doctor Farabee made vocabularies of their languages, took photographs, and collected many ethnological specimens. Archæological specimens of rare interest were also found.

The letter was dated October 7, and reported that all members of the party were well, and were about to set out for Guiana to make further explorations.

Woman Takes Out Hunting License.

Miss Jeannette Bingaman, of Lewistown, Pa., is the only woman to take out a hunting license in Mifflin County, where more than 2,000 licenses have been issued this season. Miss Bingaman is a crack shot, and already has bagged a lot of game. One day recently she shot seven rabbits, three squirrels, and three pheasants. She is fearless in the woods, and would as readily go after a bear as a rabbit.

Friends Kidnap Bridegroom.

Leonard Lillibridge, a well-to-do merchant, of Carterville, Mo., returned to Webb City, Mo., to claim as his bride Miss Jessie Moore, stating that he was kidnaped by five friends and taken to Oklahoma an hour before the time set for the wedding a week ago. Since that time the bride-elect has been prostrated. Lillibridge was decoyed into an automobile by the statement that his mother had been suddenly taken ill.

Good Use for Tobacco.

As a safeguard against hungry bears, L. R. Chace, a veteran trapper and hunter of Coolin, near Butte, Mont., enthusiastically recommends plugs of chewing tobacco, judiciously distributed in one's wearing apparel.

Chace's tobacco was well placed. He was attacked by an infuriated cinnamon bear as he was walking through the woods, without his gun. Chace did not come out of the encounter unscathed—he is still nursing several wounds—but he thinks he is lucky to be alive. The bear had him locked in an embrace from which he could not escape, but suddenly freed him, and, moaning, retreated into the dense timber.

"I was puzzled to know what had caused the bear to let go of my hip, where one of his paws had been tightly gripped," said Chace, "but when I began to examine my wounds I discovered that half a plug of chewing tobacco was gone and the rest was ground to a pulp. During our struggle the bear had evidently got some of the tobacco in his mouth, and it made him so sick that he was glad to let me go. Hereafter when I go into the woods I will have my pockets full of chewin'."

A Six-hundred-foot Torch.

At the Tulsa Dry-farming Congress, at Oklahoma City, Okla., a single torch is to be left steadily burning, which will consume enough gas to supply every home, store, and industry in any thriving city of 40,000 to 50,000 population.

A pillar of fire 600 feet high, with the noise of an avalanche and the power of a cyclone, will be furnished from the bowels of the earth through one of the greatest natural-gas wells in the world. The torch will illumine the territory for miles around. It will be the biggest and most powerful artificial torch in the history of the world.

No flame can be seen until the gas reaches the height of a ten-story building. Shadows will be cast of people and things for a distance of five miles. The flame itself can be seen for 100 miles. This torch will consume 15,000,000 feet of gas each night.

Rubber for Street Paving.

"Facts and Problems of the Rubber Industry" was the title of a lecture delivered recently in England by Professor Wyndham R. Dunstan, F. R. S., director of the Imperial Institute. Dealing with the question of synthetic rubber, Professor Dunstan said that artificial rubber could be produced by the chemist by elaborate processes without the aid of the living plant, but it could not be produced artificially as cheaply as it could be grown. With the prospect of rubber being produced shortly at less than 25 cents a pound, the chances of synthetic rubber competing against the real product commercially were becoming more and more remote.

In his opinion, there is a big future for rubber, which, he believes, will in the near future be utilized for the flooring of churches, halls, and other public buildings, if not even for street-paving purposes. One thing now necessary was to ascertain and define once and for all the characteristics which the raw material should possess in order to adapt it most effectually for manufacturing purposes.

Blow Makes His Mind Blank.

John Boyle, 29 years old, of Wilkesbarre, Pa., while engaged in a friendly boxing bout with Thomas Gregory, received a blow on the point of the jaw. He fell to the floor with such force that he ruptured a blood vessel in his head.

For some time he was unconscious, but was revived later. Since then his mind has been a complete blank. He does not recognize any of his friends, although he is able to talk. He has no recollection of any recent happenings, and important events in his life are blotted from his memory. The doctors are puzzled by the case.

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